



TODAY

MAJOR: THE SLEAZE FACTOR

Anthony Seldon, who shadowed Major for three years, tells the inside story of the doomed campaign
PAGE 15



STARTING TOMORROW

JACQUELINE DU PRÉ: GENIUS AND BETRAYAL

She was one of the greatest musical talents of her generation - but her brilliance wreaked havoc on her family



Welfare reform plans are drawn up

Extra pension may be made compulsory

By JILL SHERMAN AND PHILIP WEBSTER

ALL workers could be obliged to pay into a national fund to finance nursing care for the elderly under radical welfare reforms being drawn up by the Government. People would also have to take out a compulsory second pension to top up the state provision.

The measures, along with greater use of private insurance to replace state benefits, are being considered as part of a programme that would transform the welfare state beyond all recognition - and legislation could be introduced as early as next year.

The proposals have been put forward by Frank Field, the minister, instructed by Tony Blair to "think the unthinkable" on welfare reform. And they provide the most extensive detail so far of what the Prime Minister meant when he told the Labour conference on Tuesday that the Government's future role would be to "organise provision" for the elderly rather than fund it through higher taxes.

The pressure to act quickly comes after increasing concern about the number of people being forced to sell their homes to pay for nursing accommodation and with the recognition that the Exchequer cannot afford to raise state pensions even for the poorest groups.

A Royal Commission on long-term care is to be established shortly - possibly next week - and ministers are expected to back the radical proposals for compulsory contributions. Under the plan,

National Insurance contributions would be increased and proportion of them paid into a mutual insurance company at arms length from the Government, which would provide cover for both residential and nursing home care. At present only one person in six needs such care, but all workers would have to pay into the fund from their first week of employment.

The idea is that everyone contributes: they all hope they won't need it, but if they do, they will be covered for it by their own and others' contributions, "a government source said."

On pensions, workers would be required to pay a percentage of their income into a second scheme to supplement the dwindling state provision so that most could retire on up to two-thirds of their final income. They would be allowed to pay more if they wished and would choose where their money was invested from a number of approved organisations and funds.

Labour had considered making membership of such schemes compulsory, but dropped that idea before the election for fear that it would be unpopular. Now compulsion is back on the agenda as ministers accept that may be the only way to ensure adequate provision as the elderly population grows.

The plans for the second-tier pension will be published in a green paper in April and other welfare reforms are likely to be outlined in a green paper in January. That is expected to

point to the scrapping of some benefits - possibly industrial injury, long-term sickness and disability benefits - in favour of personal insurance. The Prime Minister, who wants the most controversial measures to be presented to Parliament as soon as possible, is said to be taking a keen interest and members of the Downing Street Policy Unit have been closely involved in the early drafts.

Mr Field and his boss, Harriet Harman, may, however, face opposition from Gordon Brown, whose separate review on the merging of the tax and benefits systems could clash with their ideas. The Chancellor is said to be concerned about the costs of Mr Field's overall programme and it is believed that the minister has had to scale down some of his ideas.

He suggested as much at a conference fringe meeting yesterday when he said that having been told to think the unthinkable, he was now "trying to think the workable and deliver it".

One area where there may be differences is on how to protect the poorest people who are unable to contribute to a second pension. One idea backed by Mr Field is that the taxpayer should contribute to savings for those who genuinely cannot work; he is also supporting plans to put state contributions into pension funds for carers. But Mr Brown is floating an alternative plan to give tax credits to those who look after sick relatives.



Ms Short at Brighton, holding anti-personnel mines in front of a sign identical to those in Angola, where the Princess, below, had posed

Short takes mine campaign to beach

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH AND POLLY NEWTON

FOR the image-conscious politician photocalls can be a minefield. Fortunately Clare Short has never been unduly concerned about image. She found her minefield on Brighton beach yesterday.

The beach did not contain real mines. To publicise the Government's announcement that its commitment to landmine clearance projects is being doubled to £10 million a year, a patch of shingle had been strewn with dud anti-personnel mines and warning signs.

Ms Short, accompanied by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, posed for photographers. Then Ms Short put on body armour and a helmet and posed, holding two anti-personnel mines, in front of a sign identical to those in Angola which read "Perigo Minas" (danger mines). Diana, Princess of Wales, had posed in front of such a sign. Ms Short posed



with a mine-detecting device and an Amazonian statue looking like a cross between Dawn French, Diana Rigg in *The Avengers* and Robocop.

"People like me were already working on landmines, but the beautiful thing Princess Diana did was to take the issue much more widely to people and she speeded up the international commitment to get a worldwide ban," Ms Short said. "Everyone in the world who pays tribute to her owes it to her to

help bring in the worldwide ban. Speaking for the conference, Ms Short said efforts to clear the world of buried landmines must be speeded up. "At present rates it will take 1,000 years to clear the mines and they are maiming, killing and preventing a return to their homes and lands for some of the poorest people in countries such as Cambodia, Mozambique, Bosnia and very many others."

Labour and the Mines Advisory

Group which had organised the event insisted that there was no intention to recreate the imagery of the Princess's trip. But however well meant the photocall was, the effect was extraordinary. Mr Short, who has never put much store by slick Mandelson approach to style, will hardly be unduly worried. The net result - publicity for the campaign - was what the landmine campaigners had wanted for their cause.

Frank Ryding, a doctor who works with the Red Cross treating victims of landmines, described to delegates some of the appalling injuries he had seen in the last 17 years. "You just need to see one mine injury to realise that they are the most horrific of war injuries. I have seen a young boy with severe stomach injuries and a leg blown away above the knee by a mine. It took his father three days to transport him in a wheelbarrow through Afghan mountain passes to the nearest Red Cross hospital."

Conference reports, page 8

Go-ahead likely for full BSE inquiry

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

A FULL inquiry into the origins and handling of the BSE crisis is expected to be launched by the Government shortly as fears grow that the magnitude of the disaster has yet to be disclosed.

Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, and Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, are proposing an investigation that will rival the Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair in its significance and scope.

It would have access to the

papers of the last Government and former Tory ministers and officials who served them would probably be called.

While the number of cases of BSE is falling rapidly the economic, medical and legal ramifications will follow the Government into the next century, ministers believe.

And with the parents of children who died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) expected to begin legal proceedings against the Government over events that occurred under its predecessors, ministers believe that an inquiry must now establish the facts. It would be expected to recommend a policy for compensating families of victims.

Dr Cunningham has written to the Prime Minister and Mr Dobson proposing an inquiry. Mr Dobson and other health ministers fully back the idea and they hope Mr Blair will give the go-ahead soon. The issue has yet to be considered by the Cabinet.

Continued on page 2, col 5



Pet laws may be relaxed by 1998

By the end of next year pet owners may be able to travel abroad with their animals without having to quarantine them on their return under proposals officially unveiled yesterday.

Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, said at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton that it was one of the options that would be considered by an independent panel of scientists he is setting up to review anti-rabies controls. Page 4

Paint found on Diana's car 'came from Fiat Uno'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRENCH police scientists have established that paint scrapes on the wreckage of the car in which Diana, Princess of Wales, and two others died came from a Fiat Uno, strengthening the theory that the Mercedes struck another vehicle before hurtling into a concrete pillar.

Police had earlier identified remnants of a Fiat Uno rear brake light among broken glass from the Mercedes' headlamp about 30 yards before the point of impact in the road tunnel beneath the Pont de l'Alma.

Since then they have been working on the hypothesis that Henri Paul, the drunk driver of the Mercedes who died in the crash, lost control of the vehicle after hitting the back of a Fiat Uno.

Paint scrapes were found on a detached wing mirror from the Mercedes, discovered in the tunnel, and along the front right wing of the limousine. Spectrograph tests on the paint

by scientists at the National Police Institute for Criminal Research outside Paris are said to have shown that the marks were left by a Fiat Uno.

Police have not said whether the brake light shards and paint on the Mercedes are from the same car, but yesterday's discovery has turned the "second car" theory, previously thought a slim possibility, into the judicial investigation's central focus. Several witnesses have described seeing another car driving through the tunnel which sped away after the accident.

Paint scrapes taken from the right-hand side of the tunnel are also being tested, although the results have yet to be released.

The institute will be able to establish the year and place of production of the Fiat. Investigators have contacted garages across France to establish if a Fiat Uno was taken in for repair in the days after the crash.

While it is conceivable that the paint remnants were from an earlier scrape, it is unlikely that the Paris Ritz, which provided the vehicle, would have allowed the Princess and Dodi Fayed to be driven in a damaged car.

Yesterday Trevor Rees-Jones, 29, the sole crash survivor, was preparing to fly home to Britain today by helicopter having been interviewed for a second time by French investigators.

Mr Rees-Jones, a bodyguard working for Mohamed Al Fayed, has been able to recall further details about the journey from the Paris Ritz, and "vaguely" recognised some photographs of paparazzi. However, he still has no memory of the crucial seconds before the crash, sources close to the investigation said.

Since the accident on August 31 he has been recovering from severe face, chest and head wounds at La Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital.

TV & RADIO	46-47
WEATHER	24
CROSSWORDS	24, 48
LETTERS	21, 29
OBITUARIES	23
MATTHEW PARRIS	20
ARTS	16-19
CHESS & BRIDGE	45
COURT & SOCIAL	22
SPORT	42-46, 48
FASHION	14
LAW REPORT	39

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Curse puts fear of God into thieving clerics

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

AFTER years of trying without success to stop clergymen stealing from his shelves, an antiquarian religious bookseller has at last stumbled on a solution which he claims is working - a 16th-century Spanish curse.

"For him that stealth a Book from this Library, let it change into a serpent into his hand and rend him. Let him be struck with Palsy, and all his Members blasted. Let him languish in Pain crying aloud for Mercy and let there be no surcease to his

Agony till he sink in Dissolution. Let Bookworms gnaw his Entrails in token of the Worm that dieth not, and when at last he goeth to his final Punishment, let the flames of Hell consume him for ever and aye."

Suddenly religious shoplifters have decided to go and sin no more. Two penitents have even sent back large parcels of books.

John Pendlebury, 34, owner of a second-hand bookshop in Stamford Hill, north London, said he had tried a surveillance camera and confrontation. He posted on his shelves copies of the eighth commandment, "Thou

shalt not steal". But still the thefts continued.

On one day alone, he apprehended an Anglican priest and a rabbi stealing books from the Psalms section. On another occasion, an entire half shelf of books disappeared.

With thefts costing him hundreds of pounds a year out of a turnover of £60,000, Mr Pendlebury was stumped until a friend visited the monastery of San Pedro in Barcelona.

"He saw the curse in the monastery's library and immediately thought of me," Mr Pendlebury said. He decided to try the curse and to

his surprise the thefts ceased instantly.

"Theft has always been a problem," he said. "It is a common problem in all religious bookshops. For some odd reason it seems to be worse than in secular bookshops."

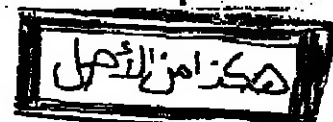
This might be because churches attracted sinners as well as saints, he suggested. More than half his customers are clerics.

"It is not meant to be an actual curse on anyone," he said. "It is rather meant to prod people's consciences. I have not noticed any books at all going missing in the last two or three months."

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Police face prosecution over custody death

Coroner in unlawful killing case calls for a review of the use of CS gas by police in restraining suspects. Lin Jenkins reports



Ibrahim Sey

A CORONER called yesterday for an urgent review of the use by police of CS gas in restraining suspects after a jury found that a Gambian asylum-seeker who died in custody had been unlawfully killed.

Ibrahim Sey, 29, was held in a bear-hug, had his hands handcuffed behind his back, was forced into a prone position on the floor and had his face sprayed with CS gas at Ilford police station, East London, after he was arrested for a domestic incident in May last year. An inquest jury at Snaresbrook Crown Court found by a majority of seven to two that he died of

restraint asphyxia and excited delirium and was unlawfully killed.

Last night the Crown Prosecution Service said that police officers involved in Mr Sey's death could face prosecution. A spokeswoman said that the file would be reopened and a review carried out by a new lawyer who has not dealt with the case before. He would study new evidence presented by the family's pathologist at the inquest and would take counsel's advice on any possible charges.

The incident was initially investigated by a team from Hertfordshire police under the command of Frank Wilkinson, the Deputy Chief

Constable. In July, the CPS decided not to bring charges after concluding that there was not enough evidence to produce a realistic chance of convictions. It also said the case would be reviewed in the light of the inquest.

The four-week inquest heard evidence from five pathologists and 29 police officers. Mr Sey, a former Gambian under-25 footballer, was arrested after his wife, Annie, jumped out of a first floor window when he began throwing things.

Police found him holding his baby daughter, Ramanulay, and persuaded him to leave the flat in Manor Park, East London. Up to

eight police officers were involved in restraining the 6ft 3in, 18 stone Mr Sey.

Harold Price, the coroner, said the verdict reflected "growing public concern" in relation to the way people were restrained by police. He said: "The use of CS spray should be reviewed by all police forces and there is an urgent need for research into the use of all CS gas and for the combined effect when used with MIBK." MIBK is the solvent used with CS gas in a spray can.

He said he questioned the wisdom of using it in cases of excited delirium — a mental illness where

a sufferer shows physical signs of extreme exhaustion, leaving him vulnerable to further respiratory difficulties when restrained. "Excited delirium should be treated as a medical emergency and the person taken to the nearest accident and emergency department." He called on all police forces to review their methods of restraint.

Raju Bhatt, the family's lawyer, said that Mr Sey was "rendered unable to breathe. The effects of his mental illness rendered him vulnerable to the restraint that killed him."

He added: "Nobody has been able to eliminate the possibility that

the use of CS gas contributed to his breathing difficulties."

In a statement, the Association of Chief Police Officers, which introduced the use of the CS sprays, said that guidelines "on all forms of restraint" had been revised in the past two years. John Orr, Chief Constable of Strathclyde and president of the association, said that he was suspending trials of CS sprays in Easterhouse and Dundee "until a thorough evaluation can be made of all the facts".

Scotland Yard said the Metropolitan Police deeply regretted the death and the distress caused to the family of Mr Sey.

Graduate 'killed after getting into wrong car'

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A UNIVERSITY graduate was murdered after getting into a car she thought was a taxi after a night out with friends, a court was told yesterday.

Rachel Thacker, 21, who was about to start work as an occupational therapist, wanted to return to student rooms in Salford after celebrating a friend's 21st birthday in central Manchester. But she was kidnapped and driven to a pub car park in Ardwick Green, an inner-city area, where her murderer smashed her head with a breeze block because she refused to submit to a sexual assault. He then set fire to her.

Her naked and charred body was found the next day on August 11, 1996, near the George and Dragon pub, Manchester Crown Court was told. Duncan Bermingham, 32, unemployed, of Longsight, Manchester, denies murder.

Ms Thacker, of Chase Terrace, Staffordshire, had been drinking in a number of bars with her friends, ending up in a fashionable bar in Manchester's "gay village".

Peter Openshaw, QC, for



Thacker thought car that stopped was taxi

the prosecution, said that several incidents suggested she may have been drinking unwisely. At one time she tried to get into a Jeep that was stuck in traffic, thinking it was a taxi. She was becoming "loud, drunk and tiresome".

At 12.30am Ms Thacker attempted to flag down various cars, apparently in the belief that they were taxis. A battered red Ford Sierra stopped. Mr Openshaw said: "In spite of advice from her friends that the car was not a

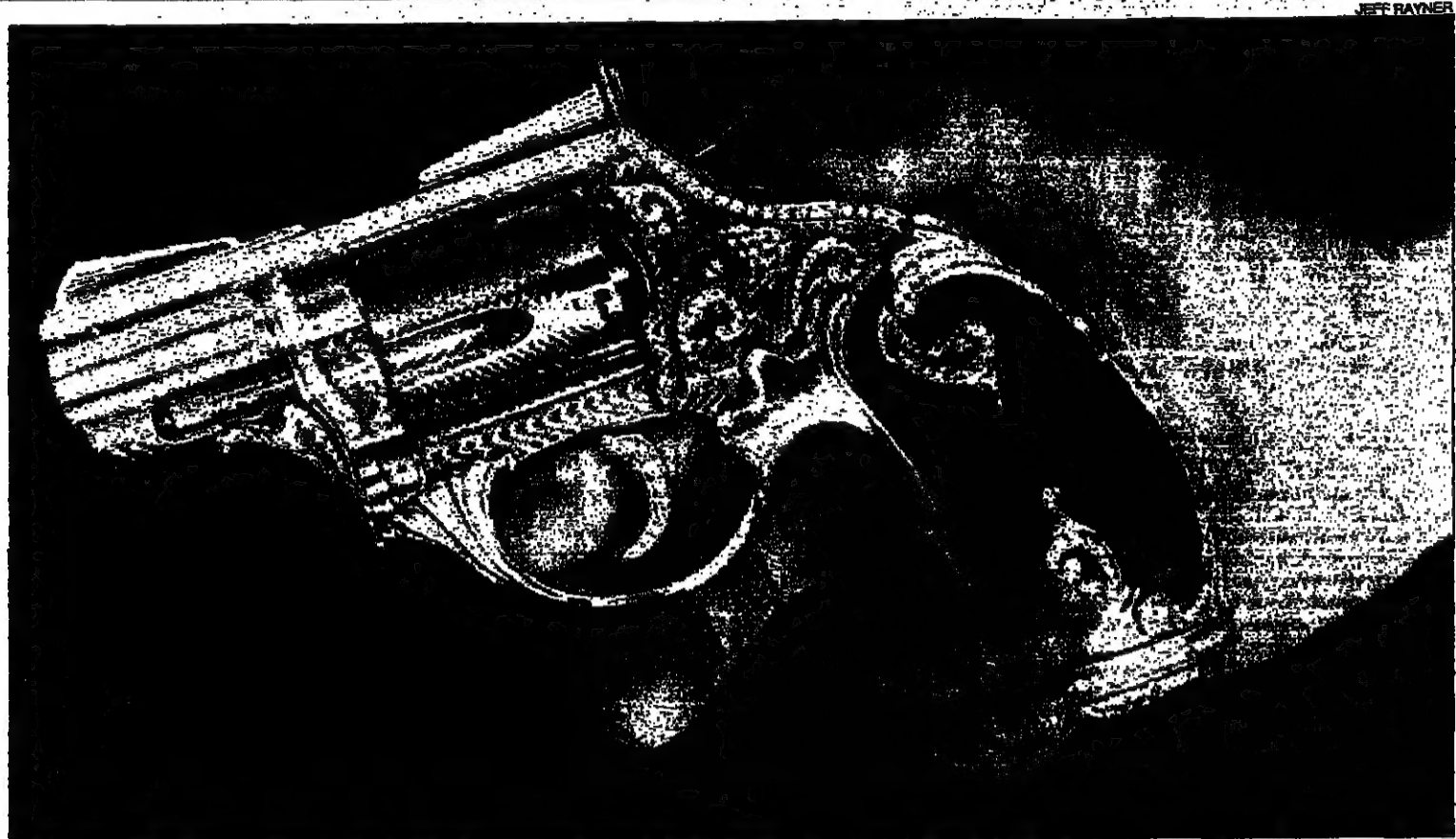
taxi, Rachel Thacker got into the car. The car then drove off with her on board and the passenger door still open. She was never seen alive again."

Mr Openshaw said that next day a passer-by saw her naked body lying on some broken pallets and breeze blocks at the back of the George and Dragon. There was a bloodstained breeze block nearby. There was no evidence of rape having been completed but you may think it self-evident there was a sexual assault. The body had scorch marks and the area smelt of petrol.

Mr Openshaw told the court that on the night of the murder Mr Bermingham, who had recently broken up with his partner, had borrowed the Ford Sierra from a friend and failed to return it. The car was traced by police from a detailed description given to them by Ms Thacker's friends.

Mr Openshaw said that samples taken from under Ms Thacker's fingernails matched a DNA sample of Mr Bermingham's hair, leading to the inevitable and irresistible conclusion that he was the killer.

The trial continues.



The 357 Smith and Wesson revolver, with diamonds studded on white gold and platinum, that was handed in to Horsham police station

£65,000 diamond gun is bang on time

A MAN handed in a £65,000 diamond-encrusted revolver at a police station hours before the deadline for giving up handguns expired.

The 357 Smith and Wesson revolver, with diamonds embedded in white gold and platinum, was the last gun to be surrendered at the

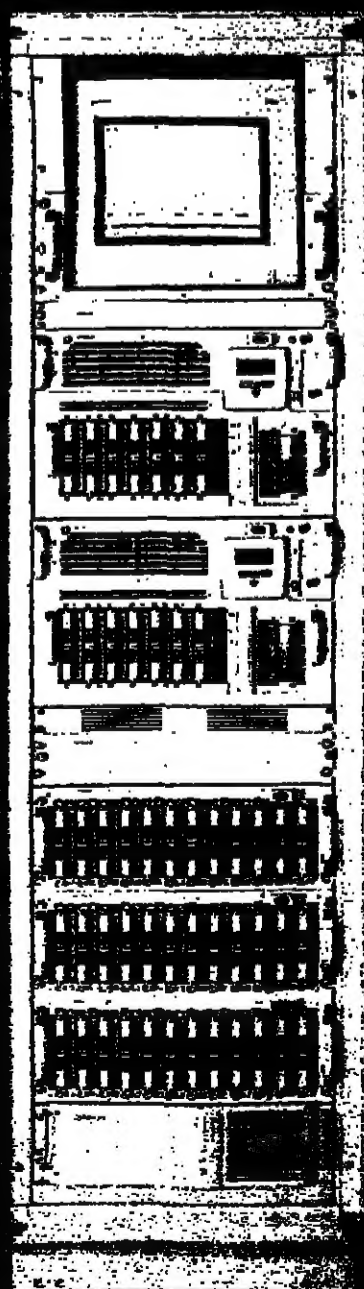
police station at Horsham, West Sussex, on Tuesday night. Police said the owner, who does not want to be identified, was a craftsman who had turned the gun into a collector's piece. It was in a small case with a valuation note from the jeweller Asprey. A Home Office spokesman

confirmed that, under the Government's compensation scheme, the owner was entitled to be reimbursed with the full value of the gun.

Sergeant Robin Pine, who received the gun, said that the man had handed in 12 others before taking out the final one. "I have never seen

anything like it," he said. "The whole thing was encrusted with diamonds. I thought the owner would be devastated to part with it, but he said he had made 24 similar guns that he had sold to the Middle East and Far East and he had promised himself he would not make any more."

FULL ON.



COMPAQ

Student 'urged friend to join in group sex'

By TIM JONES

A STUDENT who claims she was raped by six army officers twice telephoned her friend in an effort to persuade her to take part in group sex, a court was told yesterday.

"She was trying to persuade me to go down and have group sex but I said no and would not budge," the 27-year-old witness said. "She had another crack at trying to get me involved, trying to put pressure on me, but I was not interested," she added.

Under cross-examination the woman said that during the calls the 24-year-old alleged victim had told her she had had sex with two officers on May 17, just 10 days before the alleged rape.

She said: "She told me she had had sex with Lieutenant Rupert Whiting, Nick Oettinger, and Phil Bates was also present but she said he could not take part. She told me that the sex was with her consent."

The woman told Oxford Crown Court that she went to visit the alleged victim on May 27 and the subject was again raped by the student in the pub as the pair were drinking with the Army officers. She said Mr Oettinger was also pestering her to have group sex but she told him she was not interested.

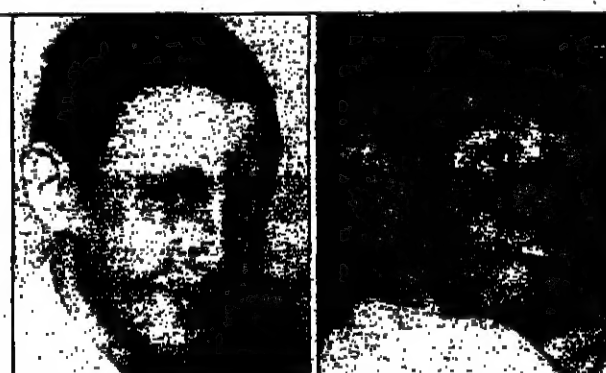
She told the jury: "Towards the end of the evening, Nick

Oettinger said 'Are we going to have some fun later?' and I said 'No.' He said it about three or four times during the day. Going by my friend's conversation, he was after group sex. I was not interested in that."

Earlier the court had heard that the witness had gone for a sauna at the college with the alleged victim and seven naked officers before leaving to have sex with Lieutenant Whiting in his room. She said she went past the sauna on her way to Lieutenant Whiting's room after the shower and asked her friend, who was still in the sauna, whether she was all right. "She said 'yes I'm fine' but it was very muffled. I asked her again if she was sure she was all right and someone said she was fine."

Hours later she had been woken up by her friend banging on the door. "I opened the door and my friend was crying. She looked absolutely scared and terrified and was sobbing. She said 'I have been raped by these bastards.'"

Captain Ian Barlow, 29, Captain Philip Bates, 25, Lieutenant Darren Barrett, 24, Lieutenant Matthew Tupling, 24, and officer cadets Nicholas Oettinger, 20, and Andrew Stout, 20, all deny raping the woman in May last year. The trial continues.



Ricky Smith, left, and Mark Ashcroft, the dead boys

Boys hit by train were stoning car

By PAUL WILKINSON

TWO schoolboys were hit by an express train as they fled from the driver of a car they were pelting with stones, an inquest was told yesterday. The two failed to see the trans-Pennine train bearing down on them at 70mph as they escaped over the main line at Hailton in Leeds.

Ricky Smith, 15, and Mark Ashcroft, 13, who both lived locally, died almost instantly on Easter Sunday this year.

Wayne Green, their companion, said in a statement to the inquest at Wakefield: "We were mucking about in a park when we decided to go to the railway lines. We climbed up the embankment and saw a bus coming, so we got some stones and threw them at it."

"We ran away but went back later and threw some more stones at another bus. But we missed it and hit a car by accident. Ricky and Mark ran off up the track. Then I saw a train coming and I

stoned where I was. I shouted to them to watch out, but they had their backs to me and couldn't hear. I saw it hit them, and it threw them in the air."

Derek Payne, the train driver, said in a statement: "I had slowed down to 70mph and I saw two youngsters who leapt into the path of the train. I could not get out of the way and there was a tremendous bang when the train hit them."

David Hinchliffe, the West Yorkshire Coroner, said: "These youngsters were doing nothing more than playing and larking about, but paid the ultimate price." The jury returned verdicts of accidental death.

Later Ricky's mother, Wendy, said: "I would like to think that people will hear about this and make sure their kids stay away from railway lines."

A Railtrack spokesman said: "Since the accident we have spent £20,000 to put up fencing in this area."

Tissue stored for boy's future

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

DOCTORS took tissue yesterday from a two-year-old boy facing treatment which will leave him sterile, ready to store it for the next 20 years in the hope that it will one day enable him to have children.

It was taken during an operation to prepare the boy, Oscar von Memery, for the bone marrow transplant which

is his only chance of overcoming the rare inherited metabolic disorder from which he and his sister, Yalaska, 5, both suffer. The two children were brought by their parents from South Africa for treatment at the Manchester Children's Hospital.

The bone marrow transplant involves chemotherapy which will sterilise Oscar, but doctors hope that eventually it will be possible to reinsert the testicular tissue to make him able

to father his own children one day. The experimental technique is being researched by Simon Fishel, a genetic biologist who was part of the team that succeeded in producing the first test tube baby 20 years ago and who now runs a fertility clinic in Nottingham.

Oscar's father, Ian, said last night: "We are very grateful to Mr Fishel for his work and his attempts to give patients who undergo chemotherapy and irradiation a chance of fertility."

FILL IN.



COMPAQ

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THE TIMES on Saturday

New British food and drink extra section



Jonathan Meades asks why restaurant service is so bad



Roy Lichtenstein: his last interview

PLUS: Full results: Hastings and your chance

Girl boxer throws in the towel over controversial bout

BY JOANNA BAILE

A GIRL who was due to take part in a boxing match with another 13-year-old withdrew from the contest yesterday. Emma Brammer, who was scheduled to fight Andrea Prime last night, decided to pull out because of the controversy surrounding the bout. She said, however, that she had no intention of giving up boxing.

Emma, from Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, said unfair criticism of her and the sport had left her with no option. "I decided to pull out after all the pressure in the media and the things people were saying about me," she said. "The critics were writing things like 'Boxing is not for girls' and saying I should grow up and get back to my senses. But I think people have a right to choose."

"If girls want to box they should box. I think it is a really good sport and I shall carry on boxing," she said.

The "teenage girls" were due to have been the first females to contest an authorised boxing bout in Britain. They would have fought up to three two-minute rounds after changes in Amateur Boxing Association rules to permit girls and women aged 11 to 35 to box.

A bout between Dawn North and Rachel Brooks, both adults, on the same bill at Kay's nightclub in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, was also cancelled. Andrea's father, Ken, of Wigston, Leicestershire, said his daughter was bitterly disappointed the fight had been cancelled and said the attention had been a strain on both girls. "We feel for Emma because she has borne the brunt of the attention and it is a lot for a girl of that age to take," he said.

Mr Prime, 57, a welder, said he would support Andrea as long as she wanted to carry on boxing. "If she wanted to go horse-riding them I would take her horse-riding," he said. "I cannot see any danger at their age and weight."

The promoter of the match, George Burton, said that future female fights would be held in secret. "Emma Brammer will be boxing with in the next few weeks at a venue outside of this city. We are not saying where it will be held because we do not want a repeat of all this fuss and hullabaloo."

Rob Robertson, chairman of the Amateur Boxing Association, said he was disappointed about Emma's decision to pull out. "I find it very sad that a young woman has been prevented from expressing her right to choose her sport because of some of the aggressive interviewing that has taken place."

Leading article, page 21



Teenage boxer Emma Brammer says she will continue to fight despite setback

Footballer aged 10 is banned for violence

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A BOY aged ten has been disciplined by football authorities for allegedly taking a swing at a policeman refereeing a junior match.

Anthony Bird, who was given a five-month suspended ban by the West Riding County Football Association, is thought to be the youngest footballer in Britain to face disciplinary action.

Anthony, who plays centre-half for Aranthorpe Rovers, Under-11s in the Doncaster and District League in Yorkshire, was ordered off in the first half of a game at Sprotborough, near Doncaster.

He appeared before a three-man disciplinary hearing, along with adult offenders, at which officials warned him that the ban would be imposed if he offended again.

Yesterday his parents accused him of over-reacting. Steve Bird, his 34-year-old father, from Aranthorpe, said his son was "hard but fair". However, he said the matter should have been dealt with at local level.

Hotel's fall i
amed on



Gourmet guide warns against rural dining

BY ROBIN YOUNG

ONLY three British restaurants meet top international standards, according to the latest *Good Food Guide*, published today. The guide also tells country house restaurants, which once led British cooking, that they are "dinosaurs" facing extinction because they are too stuffy.

It says that vigour and excellence in restaurants are a cause for celebration, but that it is now chefs in towns and cities who capture the excitement of eating. Some country house restaurants are too formal, and most wake up to the importance of casual eating and competitive pricing.

The three establishments that "can comfortably stand comparison with the stiffest international competition" are Chez Nico at Ninety Park Lane and La Tante Claire in London, and the remote Almaharrie Inn, near Ullapool in the Highlands. They get ten out of ten in a new rating system introduced in the guide's 46th edition.

Nine out of ten, denoting they are "highly individual and display impressive artistic" is awarded to Aubergine in Fulham, southwest London, Gidleigh Park at Chagford, Devon, and the Waterside Inn at Bray, Berkshire. Marco Pierre White, awarded three Michelin stars, does not feature in the guide because he has moved venues.

A further 17 of the 1,300 places in the guide get eight out of ten ("worth a special effort to visit"). The Capital Hotel's restaurant is the only one in London. Others include such long-honoured names as the Box Tree at Ilkley, west Yorkshire; Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons at Great Milton, Oxfordshire; and the Walnut Tree Inn at

HOT FAVOURITE

Britain now spends more than £5.5 million a day in Indian restaurants, according to the 1998 *Good Food Guide*. More than 2.5 million diners visit curry houses every week, the book says, spending an average of £16 a visit and more than £2 billion a year. There are said to be 8,300 curry restaurants and 6,500 pubs that serve curry meals. Curry has replaced fish and chips as the nation's favourite food, with 18 per cent consuming curry against 16 per cent eating fish and chips, the guide says.

Llandewi Skirrid in Monmouthshire. More recent entries include the Merchant House, Ludlow, Shropshire; the Fat Duck at Bray (the only town or village outside London with two top ratings); and Winteringham Fields at Winteringham, Lincolnshire.

Many big modern restaurants credited with improving London's catering, including Sir Terence Conran's Mezz and Bluebird, and Oliver Peyton's Atlantic Bar and Grill, receive only four marks.

The guide notes pressure on kitchen and waiting staff as more "mega-restaurants" open. Waiting staff frequently have no training or experience, the book says, and even at a well-known London restaurant might be paid as little as £1 an hour, plus tips.

□ *The Good Food Guide 1998* (Which?, £14.99)

Food and Wine, pages 35, 36

BEST IN EUROPE

Prized restaurant to be prosecuted

ONE of the new *Good Food Guide*'s most highly rated restaurants has learnt that it is facing prosecution by health officials.

It is alleged that inspectors found salmonella in a mayonnaise at 21 Queen Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, which, the guide says, serves "the best food in the North-East". It was awarded eight out of ten.

It has previously won restaurant of the year awards from the AA and *Decanter* magazine, and has stars or equivalent awards in the *Michelin*, *Egon Ronay* and *Ackerman* guides. Terry Laybourne, the owner and

chef, confirmed yesterday that he had been served with a summons.

Douglas Fox, Newcastle City Council's food safety manager, said: "We began an investigation after a customer complained of food-poisoning symptoms." The case will be heard later this month by Newcastle magistrates.

Mr Laybourne said: "Every one involved with the restaurant is very upset by this because we have worked hard to build up our very good reputation." Tim Hibbert, Newcastle's head of public health, said: "Restaurants should only pasteurised eggs."

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BT It's good to talk

Chocolate bar
inspire
market fuel

new
life

Hotel's fall into sea blamed on council

Owners win court fight for £2m compensation, reports Michael Horsnell

A SPECTACULAR landslide in which a cliff-top hotel fell 150ft into the sea four years ago was blamed yesterday on the failings of a local council.

In a High Court judgment that will alarm local authorities in areas of coastal erosion and place a new duty on landowners, the owners of the four-star Holbeck Hall Hotel at Scarborough won a fight for compensation, which is expected to total more than £2 million.

The 29-bedroom late Victorian hotel and its extensive grounds, owned between the wars by the family of the actor Charles Laughton, slipped into the North Sea between June 3-6, 1993. Guests had been moved out.

Judge John Hicks, QC, sitting as an Official Referee, ruled that Scarborough Borough Council was in breach of its duty of care to maintain the supporting land and the undercliff it owned between the hotel grounds and the sea. The action was brought in



John and Joan Turner, who brought the case

the names of John and Joan Turner, who own the English Rose Hotels group, through their insurance claim has already been settled. The hearing was effectively brought by their insurers, Cigna Insurance Co of Europe, who sued for damages. Figures have still to be assessed but John Far-

rell, solicitor to Cigna, said after the case that damages, interest and costs would exceed £2 million.

Mrs Turner said that she had been traumatised by the sudden landslide which brought about the demise of the mock-Tudor building, erected as a private house in

1893 and converted to an hotel in 1930. She said: "I spent ten years of my life at the hotel and I miss that beautiful building. I just remain grateful that no lives were lost."

The judge dismissed a claim in which Scarborough had in turn blamed its technical advisers, the site investigation company Geotechnical Engineering (Northern), which had been commissioned to check the stability of the cliffs. The judge said the council must have been aware, from the history of cliff falls and remedial works along the coastline, of the hazards.



Slipsiding away: the Holbeck Hall Hotel in Scarborough fell 150ft into the sea in 1993, leaving a trail of debris

He said he was satisfied the council did not act in accordance with all the company's findings. Some works were carried out in 1989, but they were "wholly inadequate", the judge said.

Scarborough is on a 40-mile stretch of Europe's fastest eroding coastline which would cost millions of pounds to control. But the judge said the council was bound by com-

mon law to exercise a "measured duty of care" to the hotel owners.

John Trebble, the council's chief executive, said later that the judgment would have far-reaching consequences for landowners if it were not overturned, and that an appeal would be launched.

Emphasising that the council was involved only because it owned adjacent land, he said: "The judgment breaks new ground as it seeks to create a new duty on landowners, the implications of which are quite startling, based on very nebulous principles."

John Rees, of the Local Government Association, said later that it would be studying the judgment closely and supporting Scarborough council.

"We are very concerned. Anyone who owns land in these circumstances could now find themselves being taken to court." Since the collapse, scientists have said that cliffs on the East Coast should be left to crumble into the sea to help to save beaches and farmland and to defend cities from flooding. They believe the collapse was part of a process that is beneficial to the environment and that coastal protection is unnecessary.

Chocolate bar bubbles inspire new rocket fuel

By Nick Nuttall, Technology Correspondent

A GROUP of space enthusiasts have developed a low-cost rocket fuel inspired by the bubbles in Aero chocolate. They believe the fuel, which will power a 7ft rocket from a launch pad in Yorkshire at the weekend, could dramatically cut the costs of launching space missions.

Aerated Solid Propellant, or Asprop, is the brainchild of a team of scientists, engineers and rocket enthusiasts linked with the Space Quest Foundation, set up in Newcastle upon Tyne last year.

Derek Willis, one of the fuel's inventors, said yesterday: "The big boosters on the space shuttle use a solid fuel made from an oil-based slurry, and powdered oxidisers like ammonium perchlorate. These oxidisers are very volatile, which has safety implications, and are very expensive at around £400 a tonne."

"Our fuel costs about a tenth of the shuttle's. The fuel for each of the space shuttle's two motors costs between \$30 and \$40 million every launch. Using our fuel would cost between \$3 and \$4 million, saving them \$50 to \$60 million on each mission."

Mr Willis, a former re-

search assistant at the University of Northumbria, said that the foundation tried to encourage schools and pupils to get involved in science and technology. "One of our projects is to build and launch a series of small rockets. Because of the costs of solid fuels, we decided to try and design our own, based on pure oxygen."

The problem they faced was that oxygen cannot be easily mixed with the slurry. "Then, about seven months ago, I was eating an Aero chocolate bar and was looking at the bubbles. I wondered whether it would be possible to force compressed oxygen into the oil-based slurry."

The technique, which the foundation has patented, involves pumping the oxygen into the slurry at 3,000lb per square inch, creating billions of microscopic bubbles. A resin hardener is mixed in to solidify the fuel, which can then be put into a rocket motor chamber.

Mr Willis said: "So far over 50 static tests have been carried out to check the fuel's reliability and this weekend it will face the ultimate test when it is used to power Space Quest I."

to hell with it,
that'll do



well done!
fourth time lucky!

come on,
it was pretty tight

I didn't want to
scuff the wheels, actually

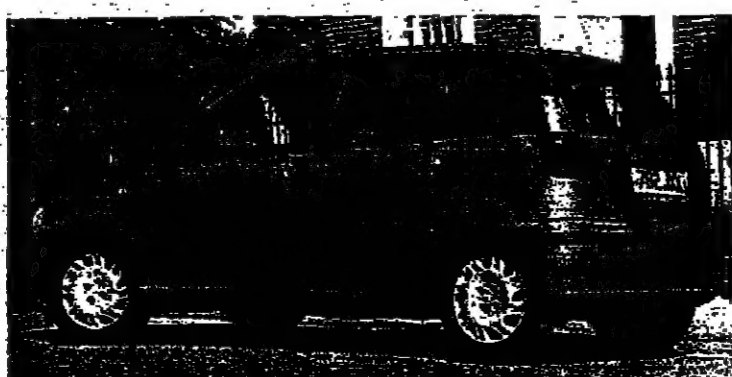
yep, it was an amazing display of
sheer parking genius.

o.k. see you later then
sorry?

if I'm not at the kerb in
15 minutes, go on without me



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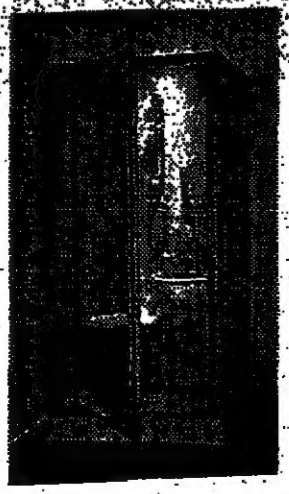
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SODEXHO ALLIANCE AND MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC. TO MERGE THEIR FOOD SERVICE AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT BUSINESSES IN NORTH AMERICA.

* SODEXHO ALLIANCE and MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. announced they have entered into a definitive agreement to combine SODEXHO's North American operations (SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA) with MARRIOTT's food service and facilities management business (MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES).

The combined company, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES, Inc. will be the largest provider of food and facilities management services in North America, with over 4,800 accounts and annual sales in excess of USD 4 billion. It is expected to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

The merger between SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA and MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES is expected to be completed in early 1998.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL shareholders will own 51 percent (with as main shareholder the Marriott family holding approximately 10 percent) and SODEXHO ALLIANCE 49 percent of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES.

Both Pierre BELLON, Chairman and Chief Executive officer of SODEXHO ALLIANCE and J.W. MARRIOTT, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive officer of MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. said they expect the planned transaction to create significant value for their stakeholders.

"SODEXHO ALLIANCE, already leader in the European market, also reinforces its worldwide leadership" said Pierre BELLON, "We have been seeking to expand our presence in the attractive North American market. MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES is an excellent strategic fit for us and we are excited about the growth opportunities created by the merger. Both organizations share a commitment to exceptional customer service, shareholder value creation, commitment and opportunity for our people".

"The merger provides MARRIOTT shareholders an ongoing stake in a strong and well focused contract services company with excellent growth prospects", commented J.W. MARRIOTT. "With the industry consolidating and becoming increasingly global, we are extremely pleased to be aligned with SODEXHO ALLIANCE, one of the largest and most successful contract services organizations in the world".

* SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES, Inc.

The company will have an 8 member Board:

- 2 nominated by MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. including William SHAW, President and Chief Operating Officer of MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc.,
- 3 nominated by SODEXHO ALLIANCE, including Pierre BELLON,
- Charles D. O'DELL, currently President of MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES,
- 2 independent American Directors selected jointly by the remainder of the Board.

William SHAW will serve as Non Executive Chairman of the Board.

Charles D. O'DELL will become President and Chief Executive and Michel LANDEL, currently President and Chief Executive Officer of SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA, will become Executive Vice-President of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES.

Charles D. O'DELL and Michel LANDEL said "SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will be the top provider of contract services to the corporate, healthcare and education markets in

North America. Our clients will benefit from the combination of the best food programs and operating systems of the two separate companies, as well as the broader range of value-added services we will be able to provide".

They are confident that, as a result of the merger, employees of both MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES and SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA will see enhanced career development opportunities.

"SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will be well positioned to grow at above-average rates", explained Michel LANDEL, "We expect to capture a major share of new business as more organizations recognise the cost savings and performance gains we can help them achieve through outsourcing". Additionally, Charles D. O'DELL noted "joining with worldwide leader SODEXHO ALLIANCE should create synergies that will enhance our competitiveness and accelerate our growth".

"SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will have considerable appeal to investors" confided Charles D. O'DELL. "This will be a highly focused company with a leadership position in a growing industry. In addition, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES should increase its profitability through sharing best practices, combining resources and systems integration".

On a proforma basis for the fiscal year ended January 3, 1997, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES would have had sales of USD 4.1 billion and earnings before interest expense, income taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of USD 233 million.

Following the merger, total debt of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES is expected to be USD 1.25 billion.

For SODEXHO ALLIANCE, financing of this transaction will be accompanied by a capital increase of approximately FF 2 billion (USD 330 million).

This rights issue to shareholders will be launched shortly and the Bellon Group has indicated its intention to fully subscribe for its share of such issue.

SODEXHO ALLIANCE will consolidate SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES in its financial statements. The Group will employ more than 212,000 staff with sales on a 12 months proforma basis of around FF 55 billion (USD 9,1 billion).

As a consequence of its stable and predictable cash flow, SODEXHO ALLIANCE will rapidly recover its investment capacity. In 3 years, interest cover should be around 5 and net debt compared to adjusted net worth of around 60%.

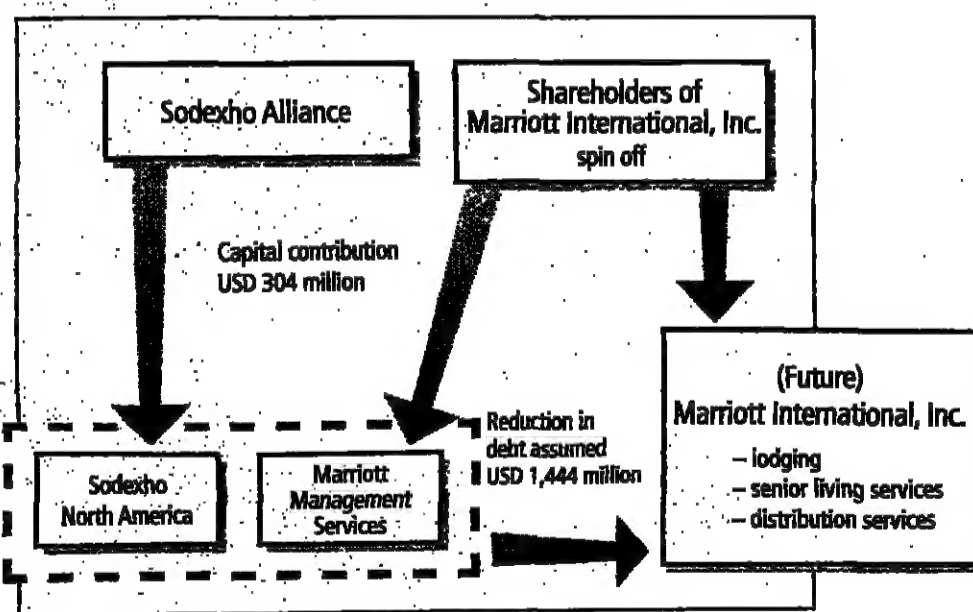
* Other highlights of the transaction

The definitive agreement is subject to customary conditions, including approval by MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. shareholders, receipt of an affirmative ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on the transaction structure and other regulatory approvals.

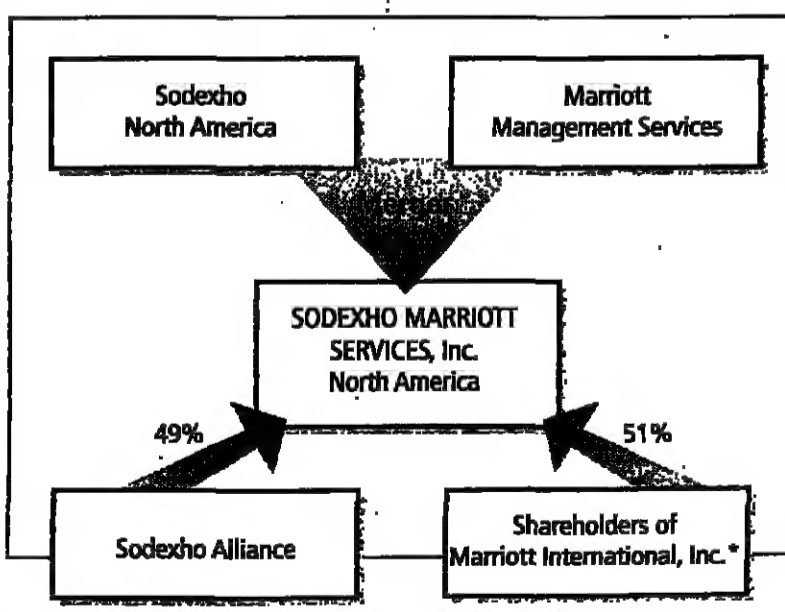
In a separate transaction, SODEXHO ALLIANCE will acquire MARRIOTT's food service and facilities management operations in the United Kingdom.

Merrill Lynch and Co. is acting as advisor to MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. and Société Générale Securities Corporation is advising SODEXHO ALLIANCE.

Merger organization



Shareholding structure after merger



* the Marriott family is the major shareholder holding c. 10%.

COMPANY PROFILES

* MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

is the world's leading hospitality company with over 4,900 operating units in the United States and 51 other countries and territories. Major businesses include hotels operated and franchised under the Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Courtyard, Residence Inn, Fairfield, Towne Place Suites, Renaissance, New World and Ramada International brands; vacation club (timeshare) resorts, food service and facilities management of clients in business, education and health care, senior living communities and services and food service distribution. Total sales for fiscal year 1996 were USD 10.2 billion. The company is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has approximately 225,000 employees.

* SODEXHO ALLIANCE

is the world leader in food and management services. Operating in 62 countries its 142,000 employees provide services for over 13,500 units in: businesses, hospitals, schools, nursing and retirement homes, prisons and remote sites onshore and offshore throughout the world. The group is also the world's second largest Service Vouchers and Cards company with a range of products that includes restaurant, gift, gasoline, food and home services voucher, as well as medication and other cards. Sodexo Service Vouchers and Cards are an innovative payment media that allows companies to offer employees a tax free perquisite. Sodexo also operates river cruises and is a partner to major international sporting events. Total sales for the SODEXHO ALLIANCE Group exceeded FRF 29 billion (USD 4.6 billion) in fiscal 1997.

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For further information, please contact: Raphaël Dubrue - Corporate Secretary
Tel: +33 (1) 30 85 74 74 - Fax: +33 (1) 30 85 50 05 - Web site: <http://www.sodexo.com>



**FROM ROBIN LODGE
IN MOSCOW**

The Constitution limits the President to two terms of office. But supporters of Mr Yeltsin argue that, since he was first elected in 1991, two years before the present Constitution was adopted, his current term will be his first full term under that Constitution and he should be allowed to run for a second one.

A quota system denied a New Zealand soldier the medal his gallantry had earned, writes Cathie Bell in Wellington

Norman Bennett, a researcher for the committee campaigning for Sergeant

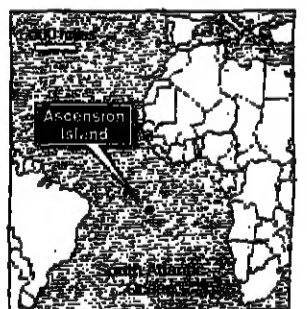
Sergeant Manahi, armed with a sub-machinegun, launched an attack on 12

The Government had been unwilling to back the claim because it was unclear who had changed the original recommendation and why.



BY MICHAEL BINYON

Britain's 13 dependent territories, mostly remote islands, are valued increasingly as breeding sites and migratory resting places for birds.



FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN RIO DE JANEIRO

The visit is seen as a timely effort to win back "lost sheep". Since the Pope's last visit to Brazil in 1980, millions of

The Pope's visit will raise some controversial issues. He is expected to make a speech against abortion, which is illegal but widely practised in Rome.

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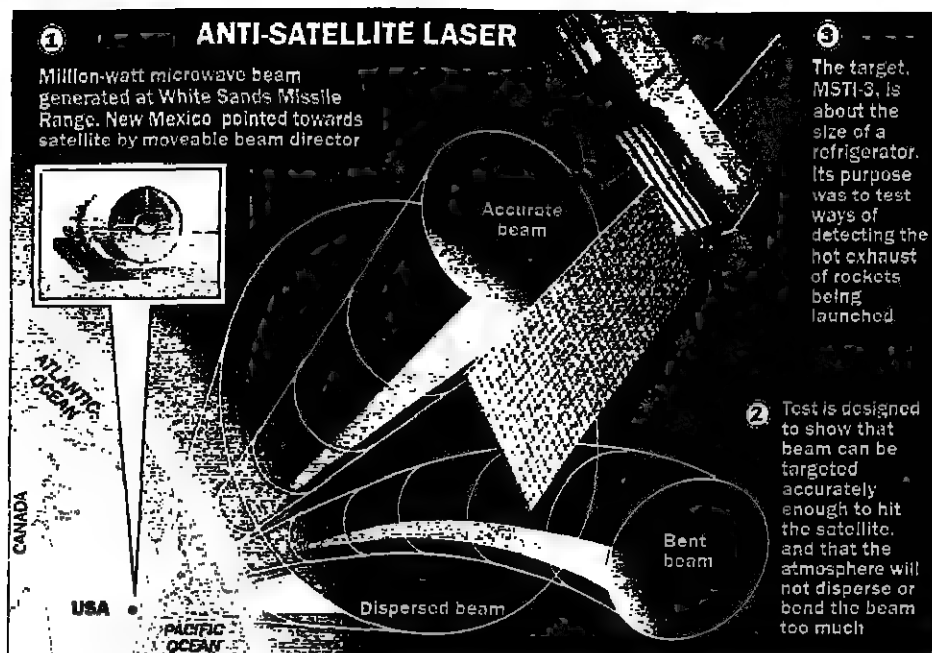
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US ready to unleash Star Wars laser

Pulses will aim at an orbiting military satellite in power test, Nigel Hawkes reports

THE United States is to go ahead with a plan to test a laser weapon against a satellite in orbit. Within the next few days a laser at White Sands missile base in New Mexico will fire two pulses at a military satellite 250 miles above the Earth.

The aim is not to destroy the satellite, although the laser is believed to be capable of it, but to gather information about its power, pointing ability and the effect of the atmosphere on the beam. "This is to be done for one reason, and one reason alone, to test the vulnerability or potential vulnerability of American satellites to lasers," said Ken Bacon, a spokesman for William Cohen, the American Defence Secretary, after a meeting of Nato defence ministers in Maastricht yesterday.

In the next few days, weather permitting, Mr Bacon said, the Mid-

Infra-Red Advance Chemical Laser (Mirad) would fire a one-second burst to locate the satellite and a second burst lasting around ten seconds to see what impact the laser has on the satellite. The laser's target will be the US Air Force Miniature Sensor Technology Integration programme's third satellite (MSTI-3), which was launched in May 1996.

The million-watt laser is driven by a rocket motor which burns a fuel, ethylene, with an oxidiser, nitrogen trifluoride. Among the combustion products are free fluorine atoms which are mixed with deuterium and helium just downstream of the combustor. The deuterium combines

with the fluorine to produce excited molecules of deuterium fluoride, while the helium stabilises the reaction. As the deuterium fluoride molecules return to their ground state, they release microwaves, which are reflected by mirrors placed around the exhaust gases.

The microwaves form a powerful laser beam at a wavelength of between 3.6 and 4.2 microns, which is pointed at the satellite by a beam director. The laser is the most powerful continuously operating laser in America, and has shown its ability to shoot down aircraft in flight. It has blasted five BQM-34 piloted drones and a supersonic Vandal missile out of the sky.

The test is the most dramatic demonstration yet of a technology developed under President Reagan's Star Wars initiative. Critics have said that it threatens to reopen the anti-satellite warfare race among nations which have observed a de facto moratorium since 1980. Spurgeon Keeny, executive director of the Arms Control Association, has called the test "provocative and wholly unnecessary". Specialists in arms control have long argued that satellites are a stabilising influence on the arms race, because they provide intelligence about what the other side is doing.

Blinding them by lasers or other sophisticated devices thus risks upsetting the balance and encouraging a new race in which military satellites are "hardened" to protect them against attack. But Washington says that its test is purely defensive.

American faces firing squad in Cuba terror trial

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

CUBA says he is a "highly dangerous mercenary" in the pay of Miami terrorists, and when his trial opens later today prosecutors have said they will ask that he be executed by a firing squad.

But in Miami, friends and relatives of Walter Van der Veer, 46, say he is a "religious romantic". Crazy perhaps, but not a killer.

If he is found guilty he could be the first American to be executed in Cuba for more than 30 years. United States officials are watching the case closely, but have made no official protests. That may be because Mr Van der Veer has not only admitted the charges, he says he wants to die.

"The [Cuban] Government is asking for my death. This does not bother me," he wrote recently to his wife from jail. "I am no coward and I have asked this Government 159 times to please shoot me so that I can die with honour. I will ask... for the 160th time at my trial to be shot... I hope they say yes. I do not want to live in this world any more."

Mr Van der Veer was arrested in August 1996 and

charged with "promoting armed action against Cuba and other acts against the security of the state". He is also accused of distributing anti-communist political propaganda depicting President Castro as an "assassin" and calling for a popular uprising.

Mr Van der Veer's wife, Nancy Vázquez, has denied that he was on a terrorist mission in Cuba. Instead, she said he travelled to the island carrying "humanitarian aid" and was motivated by "his concern for Cuban children and Christian values".

She said she had been unable to speak to her husband since his arrest and had not asked for permission to attend the trial. "That could be very dangerous for me," she said, without elaborating.

Havana says he was caught in possession of "military equipment", including two US Army-style camouflage uniforms, a compass, camouflage makeup, a helmet with camouflage netting, and military-issue underwear.

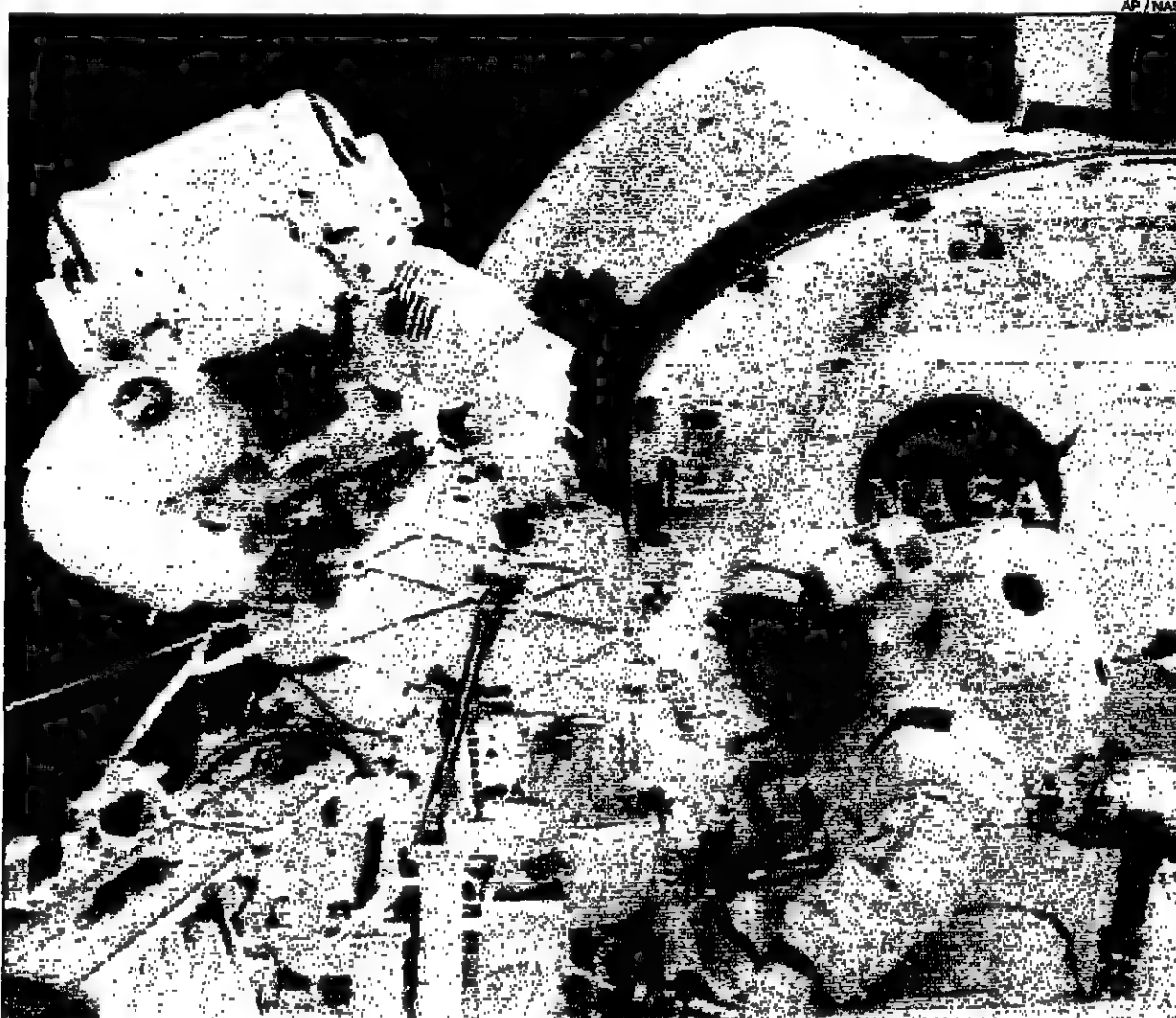
According to the charges against him, "all this represents startup supplies for

people in Cuba whom he would bring together, organise and arm, for an eventual armed uprising". Mr Van der Veer was allegedly paid "undisclosed sums of money" by anti-Castro groups in Miami to "carry out these acts to bring down the Cuban state".

But friends say Mr Van der Veer, born in Florida with no Cuban ancestry, was a highly independent man obsessed by his quixotic goal of bringing God's word to Cuba.

He made no secret of his desire to topple Señor Castro. In 1989 he tried to drive a souped-up jet ski to Cuba to plant an American flag on a beach and leave behind a "message from God" calling for peace. The craft broke down after about 20 miles and he nearly drowned before he was rescued.

Analysts of the Miami exile community say there are suspicious gaps in the official story that lead some to believe Mr Van der Veer may be the victim of an elaborate Cuban government set-up. Cuban exile groups in Miami are notoriously infiltrated by Cuban state security agents.



Spacewalk boost for Mir

Russian cosmonaut Vladimir Titov, right, and US astronaut Scott Parazynski — both in American spacesuits — work in the payload bay of the space shuttle Atlantis near the end of a five-hour spacewalk yesterday (Tom

Rhodes writes). The two had been ferried to Mir to help to repair collision damage. Their mission in outer space, which included pack-

ing experiments for return to Earth, with the British-born astronaut Michael Foale in Atlantis on Sunday and testing emergency jet-

powered backpacks, was a success. It came hours after Mir's ten crew brought online a computer to replace one that has played havoc with the space station's power management and navigation.

WORLD SUMMARY

Payout in cooking oil case

Madrid: The Supreme Court convicted two former government officials of negligence and ordered the state to pay compensation of up to £185,000 to victims or their relatives in one of the world's deadliest food-poisoning cases. About 500 people were killed and more than 20,000 disabled after eating food prepared with industrial oil sold as cooking oil in 1981. Miguel Hernández Bolanos and Federico Povedano Alonso were found guilty of negligence for allowing the oil into Spain. Both received six-year suspended sentences. (AP)

More face fraud inquiry at UN

Geneva: The United Nations is investigating several new cases of large-scale fraud after the successful prosecution last week of a senior official in Geneva who embezzled £343,000 (Peter Capella writes). Karl Theodor Paschke, the head of the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services, said that at least three cases involving more than £300,000 each were being pursued in several countries. At least one is ready for criminal prosecution.

Prodi urged to scrap budget

Rome: Italy's hard-left Communist Refoundation party ended hopes for a quick resolution of a political crisis by insisting the Government's deficit-cutting 1998 budget be scrapped. Refoundation's leader, Fausto Bertinotti, rejected a trades union confederation plea to resolve the crisis, which could topple the Government. He objects to welfare and pension cuts. (Reuters) Leading article, page 21

Mbeki requests an amnesty

Johannesburg: Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's Deputy President, is seeking amnesty for unspecified crimes during the fight against apartheid. Ronnie Mamona, an African National Congress (ANC) party spokesman said, Mr Mbeki is widely expected to succeed President Mandela when he retires as head of state in 1999. (Reuters)

Heat is on for beer drinkers

Villahermosa, Mexico: The scorchingly hot Mexican state of Tabasco is banning the sale of cold beer to help to curtail alcoholism, prompting protests. Sales of warm beer will remain legal. (Reuters)

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Korea war 'was close in 1994'

Washington: America came close to declaring war on North Korea three years ago, even preparing a military force, in a dispute over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, according to a new book about the divided Asian peninsula (Tom Rhodes writes).

Washington was increasingly anxious about North Korea's ability to create nuclear bombs and the Pentagon had plans in place to launch a full-scale war that could have claimed hundreds of thousands of casualties.

The nuclear dispute was widely reported, but *The Two Koreas* by Don Oberdorfer, a former Washington Post reporter, claims a new depth to the crisis. "We all thought we were going to war," General Gary Luck, the then US military commander in Korea, is quoted as saying.

He and James Laney, US Ambassador in Seoul, set up an evacuation plan for the 80,000 American civilians in South Korea. Jimmy Carter, the former President, tried — eventually successfully — to defuse the crisis in meetings with a Kim Il Sung, then North Korea's President.



La Lollo, left, and La Loren, who aim to bury the hatchet with their first joint appearance on film

Fiery spirits of screen lose ardour for feud

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE two rival *grandes dames* of Italian cinema, Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida, have patched up their long-running feud and plan to star in a film together for the first time: a remake of the 1962 classic *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*

La Loren and La Lollo have been at daggers drawn for most of their careers. But time has reportedly mellowed the two actresses, both noted for their fiery spirit as well as their décolletage. Lollobrigida

burned 70 this summer while Loren is 63. Lollobrigida told Italian television negotiations were well advanced for a new version of *Baby Jane*. She said she thought she would take the Bette Davis role as the malicious and murderous Jane, with Sophia as the apparent victim. Jane's sister Blanche (played by Joan Crawford in the original), a former star confined to a wheelchair.

Lollobrigida said that she and Loren had "let each other know, through mutual friends", that they were willing to work together.

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Mossad abuse of passports angers Canada

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

CANADA yesterday warned Israel over what it claims may have been the "improper use" of Canadian passports by Mossad agents who tried to assassinate a senior Hamas official in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

Khaled Meshaal, the head of the Hamas political office in Amman, was attacked by two men posing as Canadian tourists who sprayed him with a debilitating chemical. He suffered convulsions, but survived.

Suspicion was raised when the two captured would-be assassins refused offers of Canadian consular help in Amman and their two accomplices, also travelling on Canadian passports, disappeared from their Amman hotel. The two arrested men asked Canadian diplomats not to publish their names.

The new diplomatic controversy threatened to revive a bitter dispute over Mossad men using false Canadian documents prompted by the publication in 1990 of the memoirs of the Canadian-born former Mossad agent, Victor Ostrovsky, which Israel tried to get banned in Canada and America.

In *By Way of Deception*, the former Israeli agent spoke of seeing a large number of blank Canadian passports in a Mossad "factory". Mr Ostrovsky wrote: "I saw a large batch of Canadian passports. They must have been stolen. It looked like an entire shipment. There were over 1,000 of them."

Yesterday Lloyd Axworthy,

the Canadian Foreign Minister, pledged further action against Israel once he meets Fayez al-Tarawneh, the Jordanian Foreign Minister, today in New York to unravel the mystery. Asked if the question of Mossad use of Canadian passports had not been resolved several years ago, Mr Axworthy replied pointedly: "It was resolved then."

Jean Chrétien, the Canadian Prime Minister, told parliament in Ontario: "It is completely unacceptable to this Government that anybody authorised by another Government will use a Canadian passport to perpetrate any illegal action."

The Canadian diplomatic warning came as Israel radio broadcast new disclosures from the Canadian press that the Jordanian authorities were

searching for two more men carrying Canadian passports in addition to the two in custody and alleged to be part of a secret deal which prompted Israel to free Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the jailed Hamas founder, and allow him to fly to Amman. Israeli government officials have refused to deny stories that the two prisoners' freedom will eventually be secured.

All four Canadian passport holders are widely suspected to have been part of a Mossad hit squad which mounted a botched operation to poison Mr Meshaal.

They all checked into Amman's luxury Intercontinental Hotel two weeks ago, but two have disappeared and diplomats believe they are already back in Israel.

Last night Israel radio reported that "members of the [Israeli] intelligence community" and a leading Arab Knesset member, Taleb al-Sanaa, were separately asking for a full inquiry into the reports that the attack on Mr Meshaal was a Mossad operation which went badly wrong. The Israeli Arab politician called on Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, to apologise to the intended victim and his family.

Amman: Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority's President, accompanied by King Hussein, visited Sheikh Yassin in hospital. Hamas leaders said they expected the sheikh to return home to Palestinian-ruled Gaza within two weeks. (Reuters)

Top Arafat official quits

Jerusalem: Haider Abdel-Shafi, 77, a senior and respected Palestinian legislator, resigned yesterday over the failure of Yasser Arafat to root out corruption inside his Palestinian Authority (Christopher Walker writes). There is rising discontent over the greed and incompetence of Palestinian leaders, some of whom have siphoned off huge sums of international aid. Their actions have increased support for Hamas.

Shortest man in the world dies aged 36

Dangerous life among misfits was lightened by dream of tall actress

wife, Christopher Thomas writes



Gul Mohammed, who spent most of his life in the crowded alleys of old Delhi

THE world's shortest man, who dreamed of marrying a tall actress, has died. He was a familiar figure scampering through the fetid alleys of old Delhi, where he spent most of his life amid a dangerous mêlée of bullock carts, rickshaws and crowds who were for ever treading on him.

He was as much a part of this largely Muslim quarter of town as the bespectacled eunuchs who strut about its lanes, or the deformed beggars, the transvestites, and the long-bearded holy men proclaiming doom. It is a world of misfits, unknown to most Delhi-wallahs because it seems so aggressive and frightening. Here Gul Mohammed, 36, was normal. The common of the alleys would ease a little whenever he was seen raising his tiny hand, his high voice inaudible above the racket, to try to cross through the warren of alleyways. At 22.5in, he was too short to leap across the open sewers and would have been out of his depth had he slipped into the bigger gullies.

He was carried across these obstacles by whoever was at hand. The people of this poor and outwardly brutish section of town gave their hearts to the little man who lived mostly on handouts but who rose briefly to fame when he was proclaimed the shortest man by *The Guinness Book of Records*. The walled city, with so little to be proud of, was thrilled by the celebrity of one of its citizens.

Mr Mohammed eventually moved away from the hazardous turmoil of old Delhi to a less manic, but equally poor, neighbourhood in east Delhi. His departure was lamented by the tea-shop owners who propped him onto their counters for a free chai and by the eunuchs who were his friends. He chain-smoked all his life and died in hospital after a long struggle with asthma and bronchitis. He never overcame a life-long dislike of children, who mocked and bullied him, forcing him to give up school and to begin scratching a living selling sweetmeats. Children often stole from him, but they were too fast to catch and too big to reprimand. Cats, crows and dogs were enemies, too. "I am scared of them," he said.

He often talked to the eunuchs about his dreams because they never laughed at him. To see him on the shoulders of one of these sari-clad castrated men, who prefer to be known as women, strong arms holding him in place, was to see two people brought together by their own oddness, both of them comfortable in this slightly insane backwater of Delhi, where it is normal to be different.

Hotline diplomacy fails to end Kashmir border duel

By CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

THE battle of guns and words between India and Pakistan over Kashmir continued for a third day yesterday, threatening to destroy efforts at reconciliation painstakingly worked out over the past year.

The Prime Ministers of both countries talked over a recently installed hotline, but there was no immediate halt to cross-border fighting, although its intensity decreased. Kashmiri officials said the death of more than 30 Indian civilians had brought home the need to create civil defence committees and civilian bunkers along the boundary, known as the line of control. India claimed that it had

destroyed dozens of Pakistani Army bunkers and said its forces stopped shooting while Pakistan soldiers cremated the bodies of 51 soldiers. Both sides are given to exaggeration, but this is one of the worst outbreaks of cross-border conflict in years and emphasises the ease with which the two countries could slip into a fourth war.

Indian and Pakistani troops routinely take pot shots at one another in Kashmir, but the use of artillery has led some Indian commentators to accuse Pakistan of an act of war. The Indian Government, however, is moderating its language in the hope of defusing a crisis that seems to have been provoked deliberately,

perhaps by "hawks" in the Pakistani Army worried by efforts in Delhi and Islamabad to improve relations.

Under Kumar Gujral, the Indian Prime Minister, told Nawaz Sharif, his Pakistani counterpart, that he was deeply concerned. The government-run All India Radio described the conversation as cordial.

Pakistan said it had protested to India about what it called unprovoked heavy shelling across the line of control. "We deplore this irresponsible act," the Foreign Ministry said.

Mr Sharif said that Pakistan might review its policy towards the process of bilateral dialogue in view of the "latest Indian attitude".

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LONDON FASHION WEEK

To celebrate London Fashion Week, Times readers are offered exclusive tickets for catwalk shows at the Natural History Museum, London SW7, between noon and 8pm today for only £14, with a limited number of front row seats for £25.

In a spectacular show, Vidal Sassoon presents *The Private View*, featuring the clothes 20 top British designers, including Amanda Wakeley, Ben de Lisi, Ally Capellino, Clements Ribeiro, Pearce Plonda, Workers for Freedom, Nicole Fachi, Roland Klein and Sorja Nuttall. The shows, which support Macmillan Cancer Relief, will unveil the designers' autumn-winter collections and give a preview of spring-summer 1998 collections. Visitors have the chance to purchase discounted end-of-season clothes courtesy of BAA McArthur Glen, the designer-outlet specialist. Every reader who attends a show receives a Vidal Sassoon goodie bag.

Two exclusive fashion forums

Key figures from the fashion industry discuss the future of British fashion, from the catwalk to the classroom. £7.50 students £3. Forum 1: The future of fashion, 1pm, will discuss the balance between creativity and commerce and those interested in a career in fashion. Forum 2: The future of fashion, 2pm, will discuss the relationship between fashion and the media and what inspires designers. Both forums are free. Sassoon, Hestia Scherz, Wayne, 11, and other speakers. Red or Dead, and designer, David Laundy.

For tickets and times of catwalk shows call our special hotline now 0171-420 0033 (24 hrs)

The wilder shores of chic

London Fashion Week had everything to offer from urban warriors and birds of paradise to sawn-off yashmaks and a swarm of flies. Style Editor Grace Bradberry reports



The new tailoring: Sonja Nuttall's asymmetric wrap skirt, left; Nicole Farhi's drawstring slouch pants



Julien MacDonald's couture finery, left; agro chic at Alexander McQueen, top; Hussein Chalayan's headwork, bottom; Antonio Berardi's divisive American Dream, right



Arts and crafts: stripes and lacework at Clements Ribeiro, left; embroidery and flummery at Matthew Williamson



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS MOORE, SIMON WALKER AND DES JENSON

Designers have some funny ideas about women and nowhere are the fantasies wilder, the visions grander, than in London. This season has seen a stampede of urban warriors, beaks of operatic tarts, and a flock of paradisaic birds filling the catwalks. So it was only fitting

that all three should come together for the final show, that of the Welsh knitting wizard Julien MacDonald staging his first catwalk event, in Spitalfields Market.

The 25-year-old, whose exquisite designs have featured on the Chanel catwalk, is known for his bejewelled crochet work, harking back to

Edwardian opulence. Tuesday night's show began with a surprisingly modern, sports-influenced ready-to-wear collection that owed something to Hervé Léger's elastic body-moulding, with Masai patterned bands criss-crossing the body. This proved to be just a base, MacDonald's instincts are those of the magpie.

Beginning with large black sequins along the hem (echoes of Miu Miu), he gradually loaded his slinky silhouettes with teardrop beads, exotic flora, feathers, fringing and even steel wool. The couture pieces — which sell for about £5,000 — managed to fuse rainforest abundance with a minimalist aesthetic. These

are knock 'em dead dresses for the 1990s Wow Girl.

MacDonald was justifiably one of the week's hot tickets. The others were Hussein Chalayan, Alexander McQueen, Clements Ribeiro and Antonio Berardi, all of whom have emerged in the past five years and have been nominated for Best British Designer at the Fashion Awards.

If one had to attach labels, Chalayan would be the intellectual, McQueen the neopunk, Clements Ribeiro the touristic Bohemians, and Berardi the Galliano-influenced showman. With the exception of Berardi, whose show was an eclectic adventure from Sicily to New Jersey, Miami and Las Vegas, these designers honed their styles, paring away the extraneous detail to highlight their particular strengths.

Chalayan, Turkish Cypriot born, and London raised, staged his most conceptual show yet. A string quartet dressed in white boiler suits, played atonal music in a Brick Lane warehouse. The final set-piece was ludicrous but stunning: a model, naked but for an Islamic veil, was followed by five more women in longer and longer yashmaks. Chalayan is a ruminative designer who builds his style season by season. The black dresses with sprograph and maze effect goldwork were exquisite.

While Chalayan's shows are intended to be an expression of his design philosophy, McQueen's unabashedly are not. The job couturier, who now designs Givenchy as well as his own label, made his name with shocking "concept" collections. But he's gradually rid the styling of gimmicks. Katy England, the creative director of his shows, scarcely tampered with the brilliant, hard-edged tailoring, perfectly cut trousers and deceptively simple white dresses. McQueen's urban combat instincts are gradually finding a sophisticated direction — the camouflage colours had a high-fashion feel, while the zips circling the hips of his all-in-one trouser and skirt suits dragged Sid Vicious off to finishing school.

Clements Ribeiro also consolidated and defined their

well-established style. Their signature striped cashmere knits came dipped in sequins and glitter, while their apron-back minidresses had a minimalist, North European feel.

Opinion was divided on Berardi. The show was spectacular, but afterwards, the word "misogyny" was mumbled by some, offended by the belt-width pelmet miniskirts and dresses split to the waist. But the workmanship was superb, the colours spectacular, and the flowered V-neck knits will be snapped up.

A final word about the alleged new talent of the season. 25-year-old Andrew Groves, who dragged the fashion pack off to a disused bus depot in Victoria. The clothes were ghastly — but the show provided one glorious fashion moment: a model opened her jacket releasing a swarm of flies, no doubt lovingly collected in some dank student bedsit. By the time they emerged, the insects were half-dead and fell at the feet of appalled front-row ticket-holders, who performed mercy killings with their Gucci heels.

They can't come back from this. They're becoming a joke.

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'They can't come back from this. They're becoming a joke'

In our second extract from Anthony Seldon's book he describes how John Major's campaign was derailed by sleaze

At 12.35pm on March 17 on his return from Buckingham Palace, John Major walked out of No 10 to announce that the general election would be held on May 1. As he faced the media, he told them that there had been a "dramatic change in the lifestyle of the people of this country... and that people are looking for change". To combat, at the outset, what was seen as Labour's strongest card, he declared: "But we are the change, and we will carry forward what we have been doing for the last 18 years... I believe this election is winnable... I think we are going to win." But even then he did not think the election winnable: if he could have limited it to a Labour majority of 20 or 30, he would have been delighted.

From the start, however, little went to plan. "Sleaze" overshadowed the first two weeks. The opening shot was first 'Liberal Democrats' and then Labour accusing Major of deliberately proroguing Parliament early to avoid the publication of Sir Gordon Downey's cash for questions inquiry. The charge captured the headlines and undercut "good news" stories, mainly that unemployment had fallen by 60,000.

Labour and Liberal Democrats succeeded in disrupting the first week of the campaign and in implying that the Tory leadership itself was guilty of sleaze by keeping the truth from coming out. When *The Guardian* ran four pages of evidence submitted to the Downey inquiry, reportedly showing that several MPs

standing for re-election had taken money from Mohamed Al Fayed in return for asking questions in Parliament, more support was given to the belief that the cover-up was to spare the party electoral damage.

Major was angered and upset by the first week of the campaign. By its end, he, Michael Heseltine and Brian Mawhinney were no closer to deciding how to respond to the sleaze accusations. When they realised how badly the campaign had been derailed, the tack shifted from stone-wall defence to blaming both the MPs concerned for not resigning and their associations for backing them: a line that found itself in a *Sunday Express* headline on March 23: "Major wants the sleaze MPs out." By letting such stories get into the press, the party's high command raised the expectation that tough action would be taken, with charges of indecision slipped it was not.

In the second week, Alina Stewart quit Scotland's seat after allegations of an affair, which overshadowed the best current account trade figures since 1985. Another MP, Tim Smith, quit on March 25 after admitting he had accepted £25,000 from Al Fayed, and a row over trade union rights was swamped. The next day *The Sun* ran a story about Piers Merchant, the Beckenham MP, allegedly having an affair with a nightclub hostess.

By now, Major, Heseltine and Mawhinney were losing their self-possession. The leadership suggested Merchant stand down, only to be rebuffed by his constituency



John Major and Margaret Thatcher campaigning on Teesside: behind the bonhomie the atmosphere was tense

association. Attempts to get Neil Hamilton to step aside were thwarted by his Taitton association. Major had so often felt let down by the behaviour of his MPs that he ceased to be surprised by anything they did, but Hamilton's decision to fight on left him speechless, above all because the Hamilton saga was portrayed by Labour both as a sign of Major's weak leadership and of the Tories' poor moral standards.

Two days after Merchant's headlines, Michael Hirst, the Scottish chairman, quit over a personal indiscretion. At the end of the second week, MORI put Labour 21 points ahead, Harris 24 — the biggest lead at that stage of a campaign since polling began. Meanwhile, as Major addressed 1,100 readers of *The Sunday Times* on Tuesday

evening, another political squall was brewing. Central Office learnt that John Horgan, a junior Health Minister, had written an address disagreeing with the Tories' "wait and see" stance on the single currency. Mawhinney asked Horgan if he would go on television and say he backed "wait and see". Horgan said he had already recorded an interview for *Newsnight* defending his stance.

When Tony Blair was told about Horgan he said: "They can't come back from this. They're becoming a joke."

Meanwhile, Major was pondering how to respond to the Government's collapsing policy on European monetary union, especially as he knew the next day's *Daily Mail* would suggest that up to 150 Tory candidates in winnable seats ruled out a single currency. Before 7.30am, Major was on the telephone to Lord Cranborne and Mawhinney. They felt that they had to scrap their plans to lead on the latest economic statistics at that morning's press conference. Mawhinney agreed that Major should chair the conference to heighten the drama. Major told aides he would give his personal credo "hot and strong".

At the morning's meeting before the press conference, Major said that in every election there came a defining moment: "This is it." Maurice Saatchi was asked to film Major's statement, as he wanted to scrap the election broadcast planned for that evening and substitute one of him talking direct to camera, giving the same message on the single currency.

There were three takes, all without a script. The third was chosen, and Saatchi and Mawhinney oversaw its cutting. Broadcast that evening, it was not nearly as fine a piece of theatre as that morning's press conference. One observer likened it to a video of a jaded hostage filmed by his captors. *The Daily Telegraph* described it, accurately, as "a presidential appeal over the heads of his party".

The motorcade was an hour late leaving Central Office that morning for Northolt. Waiting for his plane to land at Teesside airport was Baroness Thatcher, due to spend the day with him on the trail. "I do want to be helpful, John," she said. It was an extraordinary meeting of two figures who, between them, had held the

A tale of Faust and the Devil

The harmony between some senior party figures and Maurice Saatchi was also to turn to discord as tensions resurfaced during the last two weeks of the campaign. Saatchi had a script for a party election broadcast — called "Faust", after the character who sold his soul to the Devil for short-term gain — and which had as its main character a figure in shadow, who sounded very like Tony Blair. He says that his party has lost many elections, but that he hopes to win this time. Another figure appears in shadow at the door — the likeness is to Mandelson — and says "I'll show you how to win". "Blair" listens as the other says "Tell them you won't put up taxes". "Blair" replies "I can't do that" and the standing figure says "I didn't say you shouldn't put up taxes, but you have got to tell them that you won't".

So it goes on, with the Blair figure goaded into making all kinds of pledges. At the end, with Faust's eyes glowing red, newspapers are shown with headlines such as "Blair promises not to put up taxes", etc.

Mawhinney rejected the Devil idea completely, but Saatchi kept trying to secure agreement that he should film it. After meeting Mawhinney in his room in the Commons, at which a No 10 aide shouted at him that Major was not interested in it and that he should drop the matter, Saatchi went ahead and had the film commissioned.

When he heard that not only had Saatchi made the film, but was showing it to senior figures to gain their support behind his back, Mawhinney exploded. But on seeing it, Lord Cranborne, Major's chief of staff, became a convert, and tried to convince Major of its merits. It was decided to hold a screening, to be attended by Heseltine, at Central Office on April 24. Mawhinney was to be the final arbiter. Some present thought it the most chilling and effective party election broadcast they had ever seen, but Heseltine did not like it, for three reasons:

Major was against it; so was Mawhinney; and he himself thought it would prove counter-productive. Mawhinney insisted that Saatchi bear the cost of making the film.

The frustration of the Saatchi team was expressed by a person close to them: "There were two ways to approach the election. Be a gentleman, as if one were on the *Titanic*, and avoid being ungentlemanly as you go down. Or say, we are going to win come hell or high water, we'll do anything we need to win, as long as it is legal." The Tory high command could not decide which route it wanted to take.

The Faust episode was the nadir of the relationship between Saatchi and Mawhinney. A showdown between the two proud and



Saatchi's demonic poster

stubborn men was inevitable. Their differences had arisen over the harshness of the attacks on Labour and over making Europe an election issue. Mawhinney thought further negative advertising would lose votes. On Europe, Saatchi remained convinced until the very end that a strong attack on the European social model was the key to success.

Mawhinney's reticence on both issues stemmed in part from personal conviction, but it also strongly reflected Major's thinking. Major, for example, vetoed a second "devil eyes" advertisement, showing them peering out from a pair of smiling plastic lips, invoking Blair's ubiquitous grin. The caption was to have been, "What lies behind the smile?"

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Gay politics: the day John Major met Sir Ian McKellen

THE SUNDAY TIMES

FULL MARKS FOR STYLE

At the school for scandal the naughty boys of London fashion just get better and better

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Perhaps the kindest thing that can be said of the Gowrie Years at the Arts Council — brought to a premature curtain on Wednesday by the noble lord's resignation as chairman — is that they were an improvement on the Palumbo Years. Even so, the Arts Council now desperately needs a chairman who is not a paid-up member of the metropolitan "culture club". It needs someone with the courage to ask why millions of British people perceive the arts as being boring, exclusive, pretentious, difficult, silly or irrelevant; or why the arts have been marginalised in state schools; or why so few black faces are seen in our theatres or concert halls — and a hundred other awkward questions that would shake the Arts Council to its smug, self-serving core if tackled seriously.

Of course such a boat-rocking radical will never get within a million miles of the job, especially since the appointment is in the gift of Control Freaks Inc — ie, our wonderful Labour Government.

Wanted: one boat-rocking radical

But whoever the new chairman is, one priority stands above all others: to build the audience for tomorrow. Whether it is called educational work, audience development or "outreach", it must be the principal aim of every recipient of public subsidy. The new chairman must ruthlessly insist on that.

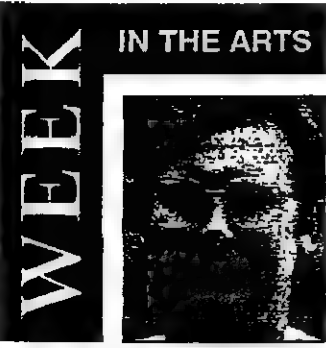
Then he (or she) must negotiate some formula for spending Arts Council lottery money to promote the arts into schools. Nobody else will. Then the new chairman must somehow lift the pathetic quota of arts programmes on television, if necessary by subsidising many more of them. That's the only way to reach really big audiences.

And then... no, that's enough impossible dreams for now. One final point, though. If Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, doesn't want the new chairman to be

another rich dilettante, he should make it a paid job. Every day millions of pounds pass through the Arts Council's books. To have an amateur heading an organisation entrusted with such vast public largesse is crazy.

The news that Harrow School has prohibited its boys from singing "tribal" rugby songs is a sad blow to British culture. As a pupil at a London boys' school in the early 1970s I found that the weekly recital of rugby songs, tribal or otherwise, in the back of the 2nd XV coach on the way home from our latest 40-nil drubbing constituted a substantial part of my musical training, and pretty well my entire sex education.

True, some of the advice so graphically enshrined in their rustic verses — about the congressional pleasures to be anticipated



RICHARD MORRISON

from a scrum half's daughter, for instance — proved less helpful in later life than I had hoped. Indeed, it led to one or two unfortunate misunderstandings.

Nevertheless, Harrow should

revert. Of all the bestial crimes committed in boys' public schools through the centuries, rugby songs are the least corrupting. In fact I find it rather encouraging that, in this age of mindless electronic games, schoolchildren still enjoy nothing better than a lusty rendition of a traditional ditty.

Not often does this column shed a tear for employees of *The Daily Telegraph*. However, my heart went out to Kate Basset, second-string theatre critic of that journal, when she reviewed the West End's latest British musical, *Maddie*. Why? Well, in one of the year's more bizarre "reader offers", *Telegraph* readers had been invited to finance this show, and some brave souls did indeed back it to the tune of £150,000.

"So, as you may imagine," Ms

Basset tells her readers, "I was praying that I would like *Maddie*." No kidding. And guess what? "Mercifully, my prayers were answered." How fortunate. Ms Basset goes on to praise the "classic Broadway-style numbers" in a story that "touches on complex issues about erotic fantasies".

On the strength of her eulogy, *Maddie*'s backers may now be cracking open the bubbly and waiting for the profits to roll in from a West End run destined to rival *Cats*. Out of kindness, then, I feel compelled to draw their attention to other critics' verdicts.

"Baldersdash, babble and baloney leading to a dead end," is the headline above Nicholas de Jongh's review in the *Evening Standard*, which calls *Maddie* "emotionally vacuous" and "aimlessly ridiculous" before concluding (somewhat unnecessarily, you

may think) "it's a grim night". The *Daily Mail*'s Michael Coveney decides, a little oddly, to express his feelings in rhyme: "*Maddie* is a baddie, my heart it does not gladden," he writes with girlish glee, before noting that both music and lyrics are "completely undistinguished".

Meanwhile, the FT's critic is roused by *Maddie* to the startling observation that "the modern musical is the cesspit of theatre today". Even our own eminently reasonable Benedict Nightingale sadly finds that *Maddie*'s "sophistication level is a bit too low".

So where does that leave the effusive Ms Basset? Perhaps pondering the fact that the life of a second-string theatre critic is strewn with hidden pitfalls. In the unlikely event that *Times* readers go collectively bonkers and pour their life-savings into some dreadful West End musical, I shall lead the entire *Times* reviewing team on an extended trek into the Gobi Desert. You can write your own rave reviews.

AMONG the dozens of percussion instruments required for Thomas Adès's *Asyla* are sandpaper blocks, a washboard, three large tins and a bag full of metal knives and forks. Of the three pianos, one has its lowest octave muted by a strip of cloth "lightly but firmly" applied to the strings, and another must be tuned a quarter-tone flat. Surely, a young composer commissioned to write a major work for Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra — who will be performing it in four British concert halls alongside Mahler's Third Symphony during the next week or so — couldn't be having a joke at the orchestra's expense?

In fact, in a strictly serious sense, he is. By giving his pianists and his team of percussionists these extravagant and more than faintly ludicrous things to do, Adès is collapsing the stout-party aspect of the orchestra, making it his own as well as Mahler's. The fascinating aspect of the

Joker sounds serious

CONCERT

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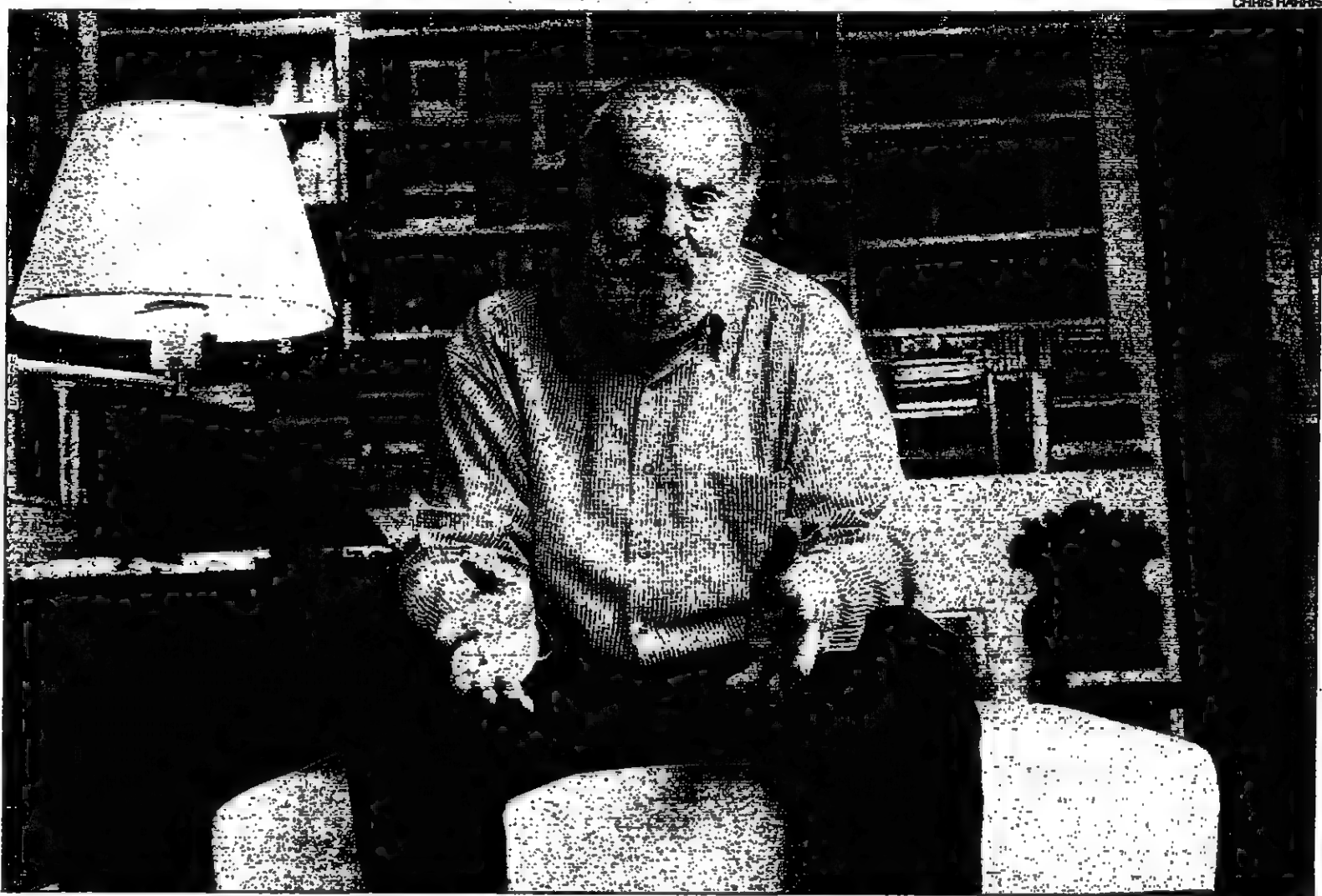
score, however, is that far from attempting to create a new sound by blending household implements with the sophisticated instruments we know and love, it presents them in incongruous parallel. From the beginning of the first of the four movements, where an incoherent babble of flattened piano and (more or less) tuned cow bells leads into a superbly coherent melodic line on three horns, there is friction between them.

Occasionally the orchestra disappears; at other points it asserts itself, intentionally or not, in a brief parody of *The Rite of Spring*, or echoes something by Mussorgsky. But the most characteristic sounds are those like, say, a counterpoint of violins and wind floating over a low murmur of fine but actually indecipherable detail in the percussion and lower strings and brass. This is a work which encourages speculation, and which will reward it with more and more discoveries for several performances.

Only Rattle and the CBSO would programme a complex score like that with a work as long and as demanding as Mahler's Third Symphony. But it was worth taking the risk, if only because it inspired a slightly different way of playing (or hearing) Mahler's first movement, where the textural incongruities and contradictions seemed scarcely less new than Adès's.

GERALD LARNER

Hugh Whitmore's epic Powell adaptation is about to hit our screens. W. Stephen Gilbert met him



"I knew it was going to work," says Hugh Whitmore, "but I had to cut whole characters, and an entire book disappeared almost completely"

In 1958 Hugh Whitmore was working in the grand piano department at Harrods. "I'd just failed to be an actor and I was trying to write. I was quite hard up." The store ran a library then, and its policy was that no popular book should be over-subscribed. As demand waned, spare copies were sold off cheap. "And I bought *At Lady Molly's* for half-a-crown or so. I read it, and thought it was wonderful."

The novel was the fourth in the sequence by Anthony Powell that came to be known as *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Whitmore read the earlier instalments, and then bought the succeeding eight volumes as they appeared. Powell had begun with *A Question of Upbringing*, published in 1951. The last book, *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, appeared two dozen years later.

"I became a writer," continues Whitmore, "and at various intervals I had an idea that I would like to dramatise the books. But there were always other options, or someone else was doing it. Dennis [Potter] tried. So it slid away from me."

"And then about five years ago I went to see Alvin [Rakoff, the Canadian director] to have a drink and cheer myself up. He said: 'Isn't there something you've always wanted to do?' and I said: 'Well, yes there is.' So I gave him the books. He said: 'You can't dramatise these. It's crazy.' Nevertheless he decided to have a go at getting them off the ground."

Rakoff took the producer role and he and Whitmore pitched the project to the BBC. "My idea was to get away from the old serialisation style, the classic literary adaptation, and try to make the 12 books into four movies." But a year went by with no serious response from the BBC and Whitmore mentioned the project in passing to Channel 4 serials commissioner Peter Anson, who responded warmly at once. Anson commissioned a first script, "and then there was a brief flurry from the BBC. I don't understand what's going on at the BBC any more. Is there a drama department? Are they film-makers?"

Dancing with a history man

"Once I'd got it down as a first draft, I knew it was going to work. It would take a lot of revision. It was about 500 pages, which is an awful lot of words. I had to cut whole characters. An entire book, *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*, disappeared almost completely."

Many dramatisations are undertaken by writers indifferent to or cavalier with the source novel. In this case, Whitmore is a devotee. Might that not be a trap? "The trap is if you feel obliged to be utterly faithful," he says. "When I was younger, I might have thought

so. But now I feel one must be bolder. Ideally it should be like theme and variations. You're creating something quite different but at the same time it's an homage."

"Because it was a long, long job, in a weird, arrogant way I almost felt I'd written the books. I couldn't disentangle the Powell from what was in my head. It's almost as if the books were the idea for a film I was writing. And I was able to put some of my own feelings into it. The third film deals with the war. I was a child in the war and I remember seeing my father clambering

into a crowded train which is the image with which I start the film."

Whitmore has been a prolific writer for 35 years. He is working on a movie for Oliver Stone that addresses the Cuban missile crisis, and his new stage play, *A Letter of Resignation*, deals with Harold Macmillan at the time of the Profumo scandal — both actual events of some 35 years ago.

"The sense of history informs everything I really enjoy doing," he says. "It has to do with making sense of the passage of time — a lifetime or an age or a century. Powell

achieved something I always wanted to achieve. He's linked emotion and experience in a historical context."

Whitmore takes a second credit on the four films, as executive producer. "It was an insurance policy," he says. "I did it in case it all went wrong. I thought 'I'm never going to do anything as big or as wonderful as this again, so I want to make sure everything is as I want it to be.' I never dreamt it could be as smooth as it was."

His hope is that Powell, taking a lively interest at 92, gets his due. "Without being sentimental, I want the public to realise that Powell is the best novelist in England this century. So it would be nice if people said: 'Here's a great writer who's been well served by these films.' I'd settle for that."

● *A Dance to the Music of Time* begins on Channel 4 next Thursday. *A Letter of Resignation* opens at the Comedy (0171-369 1731) on Oct 10

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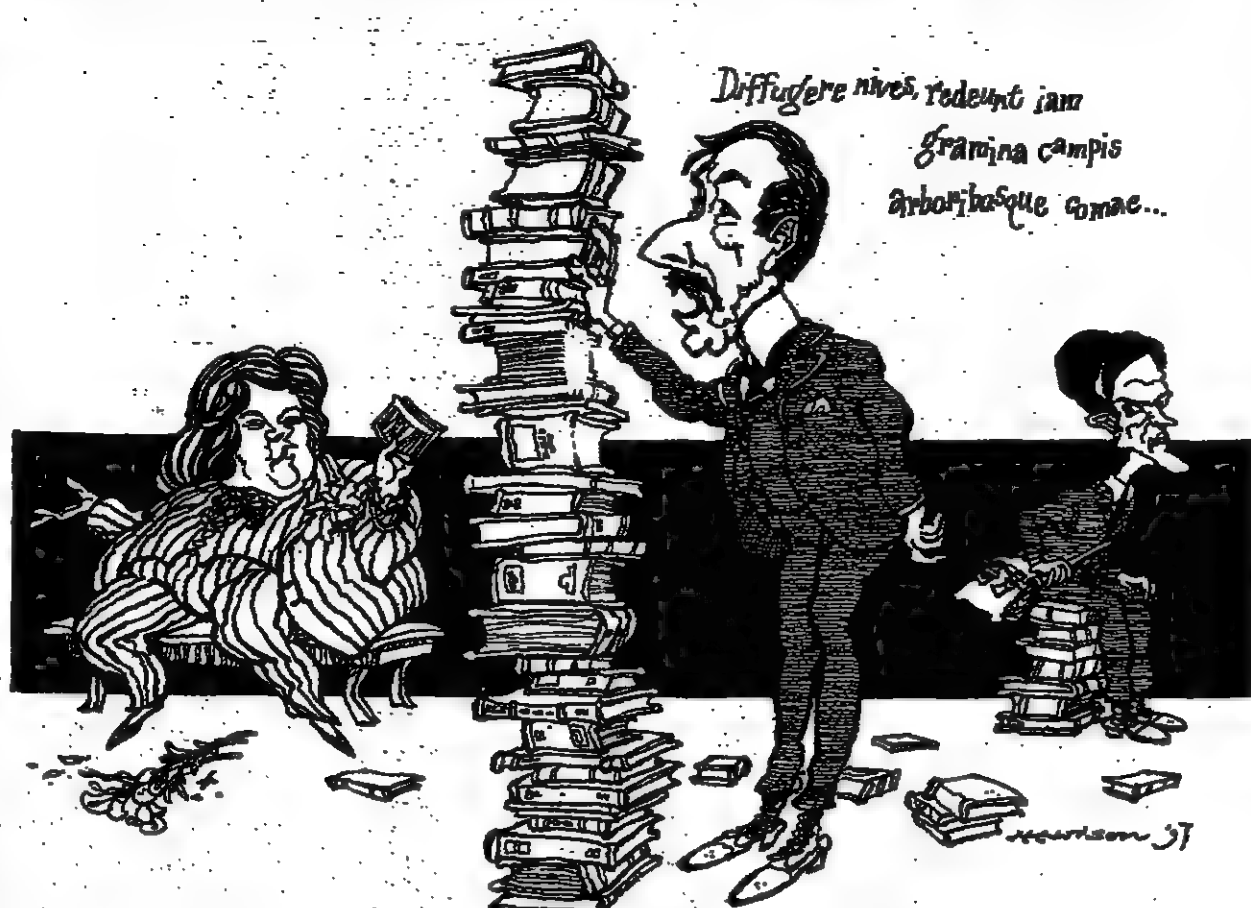
Blue remembered love

Textual scholarship, a matter with which Tom Stoppard's latest piece is much concerned, is a formidably challenging and often highly speculative affair. It consists of discerning the precise intentions of a writer whose work may have been filtered through scribe after scribe. In other words, it is rather like confronting a major new Stoppard play. At the National, the task is to find the conference in the many subjects of *The Invention of Love* — from learning to aesthetics to homosexuality — that have passed through that

complex processing and re-processing plant, Tom Stoppard's mind.

For those in the first-night audience who found the experience difficult or confusing — and there were some near me who looked rather the way I myself did when a particularly ferocious form-master asked me to conjoin at school — there is an explanation. This is a memory-play, free-associated from the very brink of Hades. A.E. Housman, author of *A Shropshire Lad* and eminent Latinist, is trying and not always managing to make sense of a life and an era filled with contradictions.

When we meet him, Housman is a buttoned-up, mildly smiling John Wood, boring the grumpy old cabbie Charon ("I had that Dionysus in the back of my head") with his thoughts about textual analysis. Then it is 50 years earlier, and he is a gangling, exhilarated Paul Rhys, rowing down the Cherwell with Mo Jackson.



Michael Fitzgerald (left) as Oscar Wilde, with John Wood and Paul Rhys playing the old and young Housman

son, the sporty, philistine fellow undergraduate for whom he secretly nurtured a lifelong love. And from then on reminiscence and fantasy jostle each other, as old Housman debates earnestly on topics classical with young Housman, and Ruskin, Pater, Jowett, Wilde and many another Victorian stroll round the arc of grey books that is Anthony Ward's set.

It is a packed, pedagogic, diffuse, witty, melancholy and, as skilfully directed by Richard Eyre, surprisingly engaging play. Wood and Rhys

have to draw on all their energy and mental passion to sustain some of the academic debate, and it takes time to see where this is leading. Why is Housman so much more interested in tidying up texts than in relating their content? But gradually one begins to suspect that his burning enthusiasm for donnish analysis is at least partly an evasion and emotional cover-up.

By the end, when Michael Fitzgerald's splendidly unrepentant Wilde has arrived at the Styr, the play's main thrust is clear enough. In the

ancient world love between males was accepted, even adored. Catullus and Horace, Achilles and Patroclus are among those invoked to reinforce the point. So, again and again, is the battle of Chimeron, where Philip of Macedon's victims included 150 pairs of Theban lovers. But the very Victorians who regarded classical culture as a prime civilising force regarded all that as "bestial" to be ignored or criminalised.

Hence Wilde, who goes to Hades with a defiant "better a falling rocket than never a burst of light", and hence poor, repressed Housman, posthumously mourning Jackson. When the always riveting Wood cries: "I would have died for you but I never had the luck," one senses an irony within a title meant to refer to Propertius, Catullus and the other Roman lyrical poets. For some, it might have been better if love had never been invented.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE
This review appeared in late editions of The Times yesterday

Mozart sunny side up

The Viennese conductor Alexander Sander is similarly practical. Ideally speaking, the house is about three times too big for *Cost*, but the judiciously chosen interpretation to it with gentle, unhurried tempos and warm sonorities — Viennese indeed. Some of the playing on Wednesday's first night was perhaps a little too loud, but later performances will be more relaxed.

The production is also a fine showcase for new (and old) company artists. Margaret Richardson, singing her first *Florestan*, is a valuable addition to the roster, as of now her top is stronger than her lower register, and it rings out

bravely, securely, in an enormously likeable interpretation. Susan Parry, too, was tackling her first *Dorabella*, no less brainy than a natural, instinctive girl, far more of a voice of reason than the so-called philosopher Don Alfonso, and thus the linchpin of Molnar's reading. As for the sisters' acid-tongued maid, Janis Kelly writes

her own review — with a little help from Anne Ridler's translation — with the last words of her second aria: "Bravo Despina, brilliantly played."

RODNEY MILNES

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Is he really going out with hymns?

Joe Jackson tells Nigel Williamson why he junked pop in favour of a classical album about Heaven and Hell

There seems to come a moment in the careers of ageing pop musicians when they feel compelled to prove they are "serious artists" by venturing into the grown-up world of classical music. At the moment the tendency is turning into a flood. This month, Paul McCartney follows his *Liverpool Oratorio* with another large-scale orchestral work, *Standing Stone*. Aretha Franklin has enrolled at the Juilliard School to study theory and composition. Even as accomplished a songsmith as Billy Joel has apparently abandoned words in favour of orchestral pieces.

Joe Jackson is different. When he hit the charts in the early 1980s with such catchy pop ditties as *Is She Really Going Out With Him?* and *It's Different For Girls*, he was only fooling. He didn't boast about the fact too much in those post-punk days, but before he became a pop star he had graduated in composition from the Royal Academy of Music.

Before long he found the format of the three-minute song somewhat limiting and, by the early 1990s, Jackson, now living in New York, had announced his "retirement" from the pop world. Last year he signed to Sony Classical, for which he has just made his most ambitious work to date, a musical representation of the seven deadly sins called *Heaven and Hell*.

"It's incredibly refreshing being with a classical label," he says. "Mainstream pop labels are very supportive providing you sell ten million albums. I got sick of that negative whining about where the next hit single was coming from. I found it insulting. Artists who want to

do something musically challenging are going more and more with classical labels." Peter Gelb, president of Sony Classical, agrees. "The staple of the classical industry — the reinterpretations of the standard repertoire — has ceased to be artistically or commercially effective. So we are trying to broaden the scope and definition of classical music. Joe naturally crosses the genres without a conscious effort to do so; he's the ideal modern composer."

"I don't think you can do anything new in pop or rock"

cal music. Joe naturally crosses the genres without a conscious effort to do so; he's the ideal modern composer."

Although Jackson denies that he is deliberately seeking to break down barriers, *Heaven and Hell* includes contributions from classical stars such as the soprano Dawn Upshaw and the violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, as well as two singers who made their name in the pop field: Suzanne Vega and Jane Siberry.

"I feel very comfortable with that," Jackson says. "It's an ambitious idea tackling the seven deadly sins. I'm not doing it from the point of view of a philosopher or theologian. I started as a composer looking for a theme for a musical piece. There's nothing wrong with concept albums, except that there have been so many horrible ones. Giving a theme to an album is actually quite a good idea,

because it creates a structure."

The title of the work comes from Jackson's belief that the sins are "routes that can take you either to Heaven or to Hell. The modern take on sin is that it doesn't exist any more. I see these sins as basic human impulses, there's dark and light to them all. You can't banish the Devil because he's inside you. You've got to make friends with him. It's all about integrating these different sides."

His depiction of lust, for example, includes Vega singing the part of a whore and Upshaw that of an angel. Most of the other tracks have a similar duality, and only anger is dealt with in out-and-out rock format. "There's a limited emotional range to rock, but anger is the one thing it is good at," Jackson says.

He is now working on a symphony and is on the second draft of a book about music. But recently pop has made a limited return into his life. "If you had asked me a couple of years ago I'd have said I was only listening to Shostakovich and Sibelius and that pop was all crap. But I think there's a bit of a renaissance now, with Radiohead, Pulp and Oasis, although it is very referential to the past. I don't think you can do anything new in pop or rock music at the moment. The paradox is that the myth says pop always has to be new and rebellious. Instead it's almost become a classical form, with a cosy, reassuring continuity."

And cosy is something Jackson will never be. *Heaven and Hell* is released on Monday by Sony Classical.



A chart single is only a chart single, says Joe Jackson, but a good cigar is a smoke

POP CONCERTS

We'll just say fare thee well

We nearly lost him earlier this summer when he was laid low with a potentially fatal heart disease, but then Bob Dylan's detractors have been trying to bury him ever since he was roundly booed for going electric at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. Dylan has made a career out of confounding his critics, and has just surprised us again by bouncing back with *Time Out of Mind*, his best-received album in at least a decade.

He wrong-footed them again on Wednesday night, by playing the first date of his British tour at the International Centre in Bournemouth, a town more noted for its retirement homes than rock'n'roll. As Dylan first toured Britain when Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister, perhaps the two are not that far apart, but he showed here that drawing the pension is the last thing on his mind.

Dylan moved stiffly at first, his sharp, 1960s-style tapered suit giving him a skinny, angular appearance so that he looked either 25 or 65, depending on the light.

He began energetically with five tough rockers from three different decades of his career before switching to an acoustic guitar for *Cocaine* (not one he sang for the Pope last weekend), *Tangled Up in Blue* and a slowed-down *Mr Tambourine Man*, delicately embroidered with a mandolin.

His voice was cracked and stuck to places, but he was also singing better than in a long time. He has stopped straining his syllables, his delivery was passionate and the phrasing assured. Dylan has always been an erratic live performer, often baffling his backing musicians as much as his critics, but this was as tight a unit as any he has appeared with since the days of the Band. By the time they hit *Highway 61 Revisited*, the rhythm section was driving like a train, Dylan

Bob Dylan
Bournemouth



Bob Dylan: back from the brink and sounding good

was moving more freely and the years were being rolled back.

After ten songs he was gone, but he was called back for three encores. Dylan has never been content to be a human juke box churning out the hits, preferring to reinvent his songs as he goes along. A guitar-led *Like a Rolling Stone* owed much to the version recorded by the late Randy California and Spirit, while *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right* was recast as a swaying mandolin stomp.

The one song from the new album, *Love Sick*, was recognised instantly by most even though it had been in the shops only three days, which speaks volumes about the dedication of his fan base.

Other than to introduce the band, the voice of a generation had no words of wisdom for his audience, but then he would maintain that he had said it all in the songs. A triumph? Of sorts. That he was there at all was enough.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Rebel with a new course

WHEN Take That finally gave up the ghost, predictions about the boys' future careers seemed simple. There was Gary Barlow the songwriter, and Mark Owen the pretty face: you would bet on them. But you would want long odds on the one who stormed out of the group early, who hung out with Oasis, who went on an almighty, year-long bender, each drunken day a tabloid headline.

No, you wouldn't fancy a flutter on Robbie Williams. Except that he has cleaned up his act, released an album of bright-eyed pop, and embarked on a national tour.

In his *Take That* days, Williams was always the joker, the one with the sly grin and the mischievous smirk. He has not changed much; it is just that, in his solo career, he can play the pop rebel to the full which, on this occasion, includes a punk deconstruction of *Take That's* *Back for Good* as an encore.

His music and his performance mark him as a showman in the tradition of David Bowie, Alice Cooper and Meat Loaf, people who invigorate rock styles with pop extravagance. He even covers Bowie's *Koolhaas* from the album *Hunky Dory*. But most

selling is the way he plays up to his audience, the way he soaks up the cries of "Robbie, Robbie", the way he wiggles his bum and then "stands defiantly still. He relishes the fame, but he also mocks his press coverage, and sniggers asserts that he's waited two years to get back onstage. It is this sense of bitterness and frustration that gives his music performance its edge.

Williams is at his best with the upbeat pop: with the glorious *Life Thru a Lens* or *Clean*. His white soul voice blends neatly with the efficient, pristine accompaniment of his five-piece backing band. The ballads do not ring so true, partly because you are always wondering if he's joking.

Maybe Williams cannot decide either, just as he's not sure whether he is a teen idol or a rock star. He may, in fact, just be a millionaire having fun, but for as long as the bitterness is there and the boredom does not set in, this is a show worth catching.

JOHN STREET

Virtuoso horn of plenty

LIVE JAZZ

THE Vancouver-born trumpeter Ingrid Jensen has had a near-perfect career thus far. She learnt her trade at Boston's Berklee College of Music before moving to New York and touring with the Vienna Art Orchestra, one of the music's most eclectic contemporary ensembles. By 25, she had become the youngest teacher at Austria's Bruckner Conservatory. Now a New York resident again, she has as much work as she can handle.

Her gig at Pizza Express, Dean Street, in front of a local rhythm section — pianist John Donaldson, bassist Andy Cleynert and drummer Steve Brown — as part of the annual Soho Jazz Festival, found her doing what she does best: exploring the modern mainstream courtesy of a well-

judged mixture of standards and originals.

Beginning with an intriguingly tricky arrangement of *The Days of Wine and Roses* and *If I Were a Bell*, she demonstrated why she numbers two of today's most respected trumpeters, Clark Terry and Art Farmer, among her admirers. Vigorous and eloquent, hers is a sure-footed, attractively crackling sound when up-tempo, shading into crooning sonority on ballads.

Her younger sister, Christine, composed the first set's original, the title-track of Jensen's debut album, *Vernal Fields*. A cool, mid-tempo waltz, it showcased a mellow, flowing flugelhorn sound clearly indebted to Art Farmer.

The same instrument was employed both for the subsequent ballad feature and for the opening choruses of *Summer Night*, an intelligent Rense Rosnes arrangement of the Harry Warren/Al Dubin classic, but Jensen sensibly closed with her more manageable horn, the trumpet.

Her second set again saw her alternating between flugelhorn (on which she occasionally indulged in Kenny Wheeler-like high-note flurries) and trumpet on material by another of her great heroes, the late Woody Shaw. Possessed as she is of a pleasantly relaxed stage demeanour in addition to her musical talents, Jensen looks to be well set for a lengthy and satisfying jazz career.

CHRIS PARKER

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Six strings that saved the world

So you missed out on the Pixies when they were alive? Never mind - now you can catch them in death

How the world changes in five years. There was this pub in Wolverhampton called the Raglan. It was a breezblock situated in the kind of deserted car park where villains meet up to swap tips. You could only reach it by jumping over the barriers of a dual carriage-way and dodging the No 543 bus to Dudley. As you would already be drunk on cider and blackcurrant, motorists would frequently witness a Goth Charlie Chaplin practising pratfalls while trying to keep that last, smuggled pint upright.

In 1992, though, the Raglan was the only place in Wolverhampton where you could hear indie music. No, scratch that - in 1992, the Raglan was the only place you could hear guitars.

Do you want to see something really scary? Then consider this Top Ten from 1992: it contains *Baker Street* by Undercover, *Achy Breaky Heart* by Billy Ray Cyrus and *Rock Your Baby* by KWS, for which all words but "ugh" fall me. Dotted in between, like tooth-marked slugs in an already horrid salad, are singles by Annie Lennox, Brian May and Luther Vandross.

And all of these atrocities were woven from the Only Permitted Instruments, circa 1985 to 1994: synthesizers. And not the crunching, crushing, diesel-fumed synths of the Prodigy, the Chemical Brothers and DJ Shadow, but the parping, quacking, sexless synths that sound like wetlook perms and ironed jeans.

So we ran to the Raglan every Saturday night, and loaded up on guitar filth marina. Guitars that jangled, guitars that exploded - in screams of white noise, guitars that pierced the spine, guitars that filled your nose, and mouth with a taste not unlike that of blood; guitars that left you pleasantly deaf. And of all these guitars, the Pixies' flurried you up the quickest. Black Francis, screaming like a cat in a deep-fat fryer; the unholy grinning shark with lipstick that was Kim Deal, and two other blokes. They were the noise.

The Pixies sounded like the dirtiest, wildest, most transcendently, detail party-

thing in the world. They were demons trying to be godlike. Dick Dale surging a buffalo in Mexico's crack-filled oceans, the Beach Boys playing in Hell.

Kurt Cobain half-inched everything he knew from the Pixies and admitted it: "I was trying to write the ultimate pop song," he explained of *Smells Like Teen Spirit*. "I was basically trying to rip off the Pixies." The Pixies, you see, invented rock as we know it now, as they blissfully stumbled across a New Dynamic start off really loud, go very, very quiet and then EXPLODE in a wall of sound so vast that the beer jumps out of your bottle. Radiohead, Manic Street Preachers, Oasis, the Chemical Brothers and the

Prodigy have all risen to greatness on the back of this trick. But, alas, the Pixies were ahead of their time, heroic guitar colossi in an age of synth midgets, and you get nothing for being ahead of your time, bar the undying gratitude of kids who couldn't dance until, say, *U-Mass* made them. They broke up in 1991, and the world was eerily silent until Nirvana picked up the baton with the unfunny *Pixies of Nevermind*.

But now there's *Death to the Pixies*, a rampancy rocking Best Of that makes Oasis look like Nick Drake. It goes beyond being the best album of 1997. Putting a date on it cheapens the time: it would be like calmly writing the date of the apocalypse in your diary. The world should be almost panicked by its release.

Those not in the know should try to imagine the thrill of screaming lyrics like "Slicing up eyeballs, ugh, ugh, ugh", or reciting the mantra: "If man is five/Then the devil is six/And if the devil is six/Then Gawd is seven", and what it would be like to be strapped to the nosecone of the space shuttle on take-off. While smoking a lag.

The Pixies were guitar's ultimate glory. Man's steaming mud monkey come to save us all. And *Death to the Pixies* is their resurrection. All hail.

● *Death to the Pixies* is released by 4AD on Monday



CAITLIN MORAN

NEW ALBUMS: Janet Jackson shows her more sincere side to David Sinclair on *The Velvet Rope*

Ballad on the dancefloor

JANET JACKSON

The Velvet Rope (Virgin V2860 £15.99)

YOU have to admire Janet Jackson, if only for her ability to maintain her equilibrium while all around are losing theirs. Although perfectly capable of upstaging her brother Michael, as she did in the video of *Scream*, their duet in which she appeared as simply the coolest woman on (and off) the planet, she can still seem quite sane and sincere when the moment calls for it, albeit in that showbizzy, Diana Ross sort of way.

The title of her new album, *The Velvet Rope*, is a metaphor for the emotional cordon which we all throw around our hearts to keep the rest of the world at bay, a theme which she explores in the somewhat ineffectual track of the same name. But a more appropriate image might be to think of it as a tightrope along which Jackson struts, deftly balancing tense, state-of-the-art dance tracks such as *You on the one side*, and saccharine-sweet ballads including *Special* ("I have a need to feel real special") on the other.

Her voice is better suited to the dance stuff, where the production by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis sounds effortlessly modern and she performs with the raw sensuality of an aerobics class mistress. *Got 'til It's Gone*, with its hip-hop beat and bewitching sample of Joni Mitchell's *Big Yellow Taxi*, and *Together Again*, which sets a Motown-flavoured tune to a romping house groove, are among the best numbers on the album.

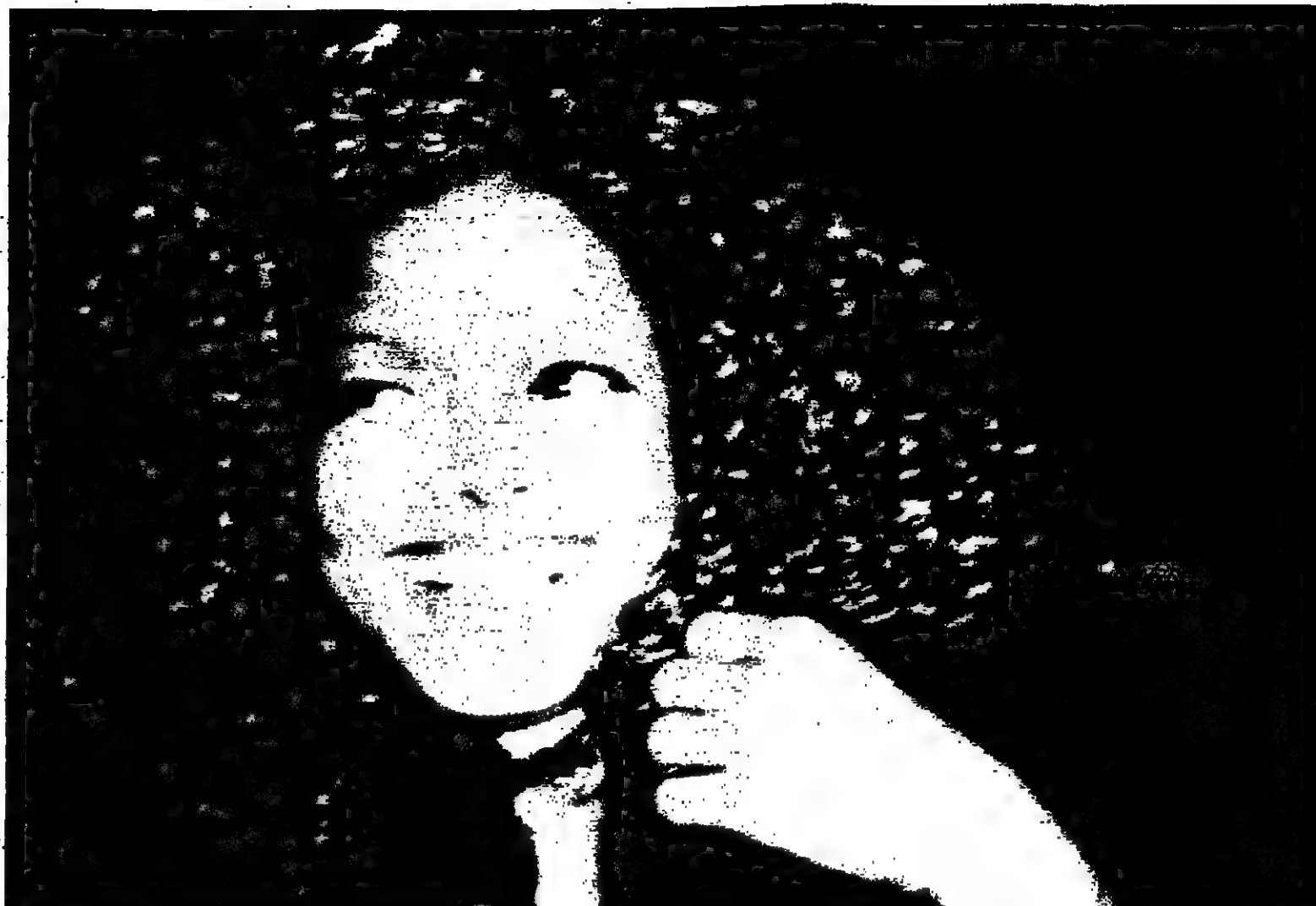
Elsewhere, she has a tendency to mistake sexual for soulful, treating us to lots of salacious moaning and groaning on *Rope Burn* and *My Nasty*, but leaving an emotional vacuum at the heart of the George Michael-esque ballad *Anything*, and a gently shuffling version of Rod Stewart's *Tonight's the Night*.

MIKE SCOTT

Still Burning (Chrysalis 7243 8 57389 £12.99) HAVING belatedly embarked on a solo career with an acoustic folk album, *Being*, *Em All In*, released in 1995, Mike Scott has now re-emerged as a bona fide rock'n'roller on the magnificent follow-up, *Still Burning*.

As always there is a lovely lil of indeterminate Celtic origin in his voice, and a poetic thrust to his words. But now there is also a new backing band, built around the formidable rhythm section of Jim Keitner (drums) and Pino Paladino (bass), who inject a tremendous swagger into songs such as *Rare*, *Precious* and *Gone* and the recent single, *Love Anyway*. "Let's walk through the jungle/Put your arm in my arm/And should this ground start to crumble/We'll come to no harm," Scott sings in the stunning opener. *Questions*, to which the Memphis Horns lend an added punch.

Many of the songs are further beefed up by the harmony vocals of Ian McNabb, whose celebrated 1994 album, *Head Like a Rock*, this record in some ways



The title of Janet Jackson's new album is a metaphor for the emotional cordon we throw around our hearts to keep the rest of the world at bay, OK?

resembles. Both albums share a spiritual bond with Neil Young, McNabb's having featured Young's backing group, Crazy Horse, and Scott's having been co-produced by Niko Bolas, well-known for his association with Young. And, like Young's best work, *Still Burning* is an album that brings fresh wit and tremendous energy to music steeped in the traditional verities of rock'n'roll.

SUEDE

Sci-Fi Lullabies (Nude 9CD: two discs £16.49) OASIS are often praised for their commitment to putting out good B-sides on their singles, and rightly so. But like so much else about the 1990s it was Suede who initiated the practice of including anything between one and

four perfectly good extra new songs on every single they have released. After 12 singles, this amounts to a substantial body of work not incorporated on any album until now.

Sci-Fi Lullabies wraps this wealth of less familiar material - 27 tracks in all - in one inclusive package. While there is a preponderance of slow, dolorous and generally less instantly catchy songs than tend to grace the band's albums and A-sides, very little of it could be dismissed as filler. And several numbers, including *Killing of a Flashboy*, *My Insatiable One* and *To the*

Birds, have been an essential part of the band's repertoire at different times.

How irritating, though, that this wonderful package, complete with lyrics and all release details, could not have found room for *Stay Together*, the one A-side not included on any of Suede's albums, and surely one of their best lullabies ever.

PATTI SMITH

Peace and Noise (Arista/BMG 07822 18986 £15.49) PATTI SMITH'S return to the fray last year with *Gone Again*, after a 15-year retirement, was naturally welcomed as something of an event. But if she is going to make a habit of releasing new albums, then the hard work of convincing people that she means business begins now.

Thankfully, *Peace and Noise* is a dark and at times furiously powerful collection of songs that leaves no doubt about her intentions. As on *Gone Again*, the theme of death looms large - titles include *Dead City*, *Death Singing*, *Memento Mori* and *Last Call*. But here the stories are vehicles for social commentary - about Aids, the Heaven's Gate suicides, the Vietnam War - rather than personal reveries.

If there is a criticism, it is that the trad-rock arrangements and long historical perspective of numbers such as *1959* - "We built that thing/And it grew wings/In 1959" - give the album a backward-looking feel, making it more of an archaeological dig than a slice of 1990s rock'n'roll.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

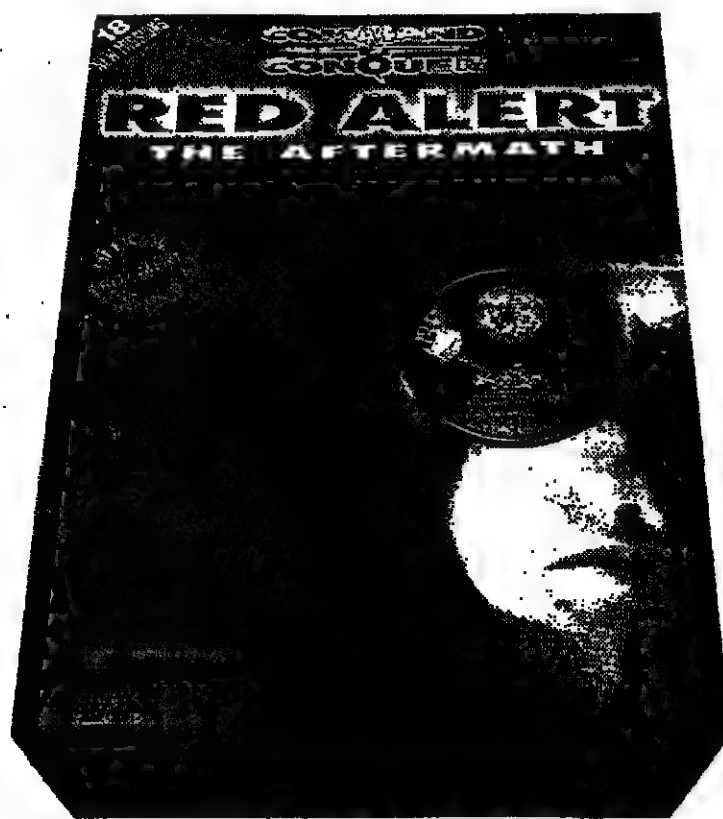
TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 Urban Hymns Verve (Hut)
- 2 Be Here Now Oasis (Creation)
- 3 Portishead Portishead (Go! Beat)
- 4 Marchin' Already Ocean Colour Scene (MCA)
- 5 The Big Picture Elton John (Rocket)
- 6 Maverick a Strike Finley Quayle (Epic)
- 7 White on Blonde Texas (Mercury)
- 8 Homogenic Björk (One Little Indian)
- 9 OK Computer Radiohead (Parlophone)
- 10 Butterfly Mariah Carey (Columbia)

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● Figure in brackets denotes last week's position

take command



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jackson browne

Jackson Browne was to the '70s what Bob Dylan was to the '60s. As Dylan was the premier solo folk-rock artist of the '60s, Jackson Browne could certainly lay claim to that status in the '70s and right through to the '90s.

The excluded are always with us

John Lloyd considers the poor — and the politically homeless

Fifty men and women, suffering from social exclusion, wrote an open letter to Tony Blair this week, hoping that the lamp of the media lit for the Prime Minister would spare a beam for their appeal. Their cry was heard but faintly. The Government ignored them and steam-rolled on to the final victory jigs today.

The excluded are the kind of men and women the Government regards as a menace to society. They are professors of sociology and social policy, lodged in those crevices in the higher education system which were opened up by the expansion of academic research into social change from the 1960s. Generally leftish, dedicated to such notions as greater equality, they are to new Labour the academic equivalent of squeegee merchants, forever sliding up to one's car when one is in a hurry, offering to make one's vision clearer with a couple of pieces of research showing that life is more complicated than one's last speech.

The letter they wrote was published on Wednesday in the *Financial Times*, as befits missives from the excluded. It was a classic piece of social democracy of the kind Roy Hattersley has made the centrepiece of his second career as a Savonarola to new Labour, building a bonfire to burn away its vanities. The vanity he and the professors see is that which new Labour proclaims as its way of ending exclusion — through work, labour market flexibility and education, education, education. Work is good, say the professors, but not good enough; although redistribution is not the only route to a more equal society, "it would help". Ministers, however, seem to have erased it from the map altogether.

The letter was written too late to benefit from the Prime Minister's thoughts on the matter in his conference speech, but they would not have moderated its tone. He did not want, he said, hungry children, impoverished pensioners and anomic youth, and would not rest until the country in which they exist was gone. He then went on to condemn the Tories for raising taxes. Where he was more precise, and as passionate, was in making clear that the route out of exclusion was through work. "Get a job" is the message — insistent, backed with sanctions; in that virtue, and sociability, can again be found.

(Tony Blair's speeches, on such an occasion, have about them that modern contribution to the art of rhetoric: they moisten the tear ducts and cause the teeth to grind at the same time.)

The day after the speech, I went with some people in the voluntary sector to meet a few of the excluded. A group called Streetlife, composed of homeless men, had set up shop in an old warehouse beside King's Cross station in London, got together a few grants and functioned as a kind of advice and discussion agency. In the

course of conversation, one of them — his name was Joe — said that the ideal for homeless people was, in the main, not to join the "straight" world but to construct and to live in self-sustaining communities: a tradition which he noted went back to the Middle Ages.

But Joe's observation also confirmed something which is treated as obvious by those who work in the world of the excluded or dispossessed or poor. That is, that many do indeed not wish to be part of the "straight" world, finding more pleasure, more fulfilment and more comfort in an exclusion which seems repellent to the majority.

So what? a moderniser might say. Let them stay out. We design policies for that majority, especially the young among it, who do not want to fall into or remain in that marginalised world. Yet that response, fervent though it is in the belief that work includes and that inclusion is a necessary part of the Government's mission, runs against the objection of the 50 professors. Where no redistribution is attempted by the conventional fiscal means of taking from the rich and giving to the poor, then the widening gulf between rich and poor which was such a feature of the Conservative era remains, or even worsens, according to the workings of the market.

The lower slopes of the service economy which we, with all other advanced economies, have become are often a poor school of citizenship — poorer than the industrial conglomerations of the pre-1970s era where skill, union organisation and relative security gave shape to working-class society and thus to society as a whole. The modern equivalent is fragmented and often a deeply insecure place — fine for the young and self-confident who can fit or be knocked hither and thither; dispiriting and enervating for men and women beyond their mid-thirties, with families they either have or want, who experience the market more as unattainable or demanding than as filled with choice and opportunity.

It is the world we have; no alternative presently stands. But there are two "in-system" critiques. One is that of the 50 professors which demands that Labour returns to a redistributionist agenda. It demands that it capitalises on what has been invoked as a "giving age" — in yet another lachrymose, teeth-grinding phrase redolent of the Departed One — by using the fiscal system to take and to give, just like the good old days.

And the other is Joe's: the self-sustaining — or, for that matter, the scrounging — communities of the street people who want to stay on the street and to affirm their diversity by staying clear of the world of work, or at least of that work organised for them by the State. Less of a giving, but at least a living, age.

John Lloyd is associate editor of the *New Statesman*.



Making mugs of us all

Some 160 years ago a Whig, Viscount Melbourne, warned radical colleagues that they should not write the Tories off. He put it like this:

I do not quite share in your confidence in the strength of the liberal party in England, and in the impossibility of the Conservatives... how much the power of the liberals has always depended upon excitement and what is called agitation — this force is like that of a fever or epilepsy, almost irresistible at the moment, but transient and succeeded by weakness.

"Irresistible at the moment." That is how the Labour Party and its leader have seemed to me all week at Brighton. There is the feeling almost of a gathering wind, at first moving only the corners of the net curtains of my hotel room; then lifting papers and pamphlets, rustling trees; finally roaring down the seashore, blowing away the placards of protesters, throwing sand in the eyes of dissenters, shaking the very buildings as people take shelter and gape.

It is not easy to be a Conservative in these autumn days of 1997. It is not easy to see sceptical minds — minds of writers, minds of thinkers, minds better than my own — going down like ninetails before the force of a bogus political idea, and still hold fast to the knowledge that this is all just a fever, a kind of dream, and that it will pass. When a delirium takes hold, we struggle to believe it is not forever.

And yet I am gripped by a different conviction. It is that the palace of dreams is without foundation, the fabric baseless. Reach out and try to touch, to grasp at these coloured shapes and dancing lights — these "beacons" — and they dance away. Your hand returns clammy and cold, empty, save for sand. There is a howling void at the centre of all this: a huge, weird hollowiness.

There is also a mendacity. To keep my grip on what is real, I place before me on the desk where I type a set of five new coffee mugs, sold here at Brighton in aid of party funds. Each mug is a different colour: strawberry, burnt lime, pale blue, magenta, yellow. These were the five colours of the billboards the Labour Party used in its general election campaign. The admen's strategy was cute: to use changing colours, changing messages, to gain attention for what was really the repetition of just a handful of simple, key sentences, and ram these home. They included: "Smaller

A nation in the grip of mass hysteria cannot resist Mr Blair. But it will pass

class sizes". "More jobs for young people". "Tough on crime". "No rise in income tax rates" and "Waiting lists will be shorter". Each of my five mugs in the five colours bears one of the messages. Or so it appears to anyone who never actually memorised them last April. If you did, you may find the slogan on the pale blue mug unfamiliar. It reads: "Treat more NHS patients." That was not the billboard message, which read "Waiting lists will be shorter". The past has been quietly rewritten.

I make no point about the inability of politicians to fulfil pledges, or about unexpected problems in the health service. I remark only on the small but signal dishonesty of changing the pledge on the mug. It is the work of a mind which has sought to alter the record: to airbrush out a tiny bit of history. To me there is always something a bit frightening about those who seek to persuade you that you have not seen something you have seen.

I stare up at that mug, and down at my text of Tony Blair's speech on Tuesday: "You kept faith with us. And we will keep faith with you". "A Government of high ideals and hard choices". "Creative. Compassionate. Confident of our place in the world... A beacon to the world". On May 1, 1997, fear lost. Hope won. The Giving Age began... and I look back up at that blue mug and smile a small, secret, mischievous smile on the possibility that Mr Blair may next appoint himself Prime Minister of Hearts, and rediscover the confidence to be sure — whatever the fawning headlines and overheated media prose may suggest — that the love affair will pass.

For love like this is a kind of hysteria. I use the term not in its popular sense but as clinical psychologists use it. I do not mean that people start running around and waving their arms (although on the arrival of Tony Blair in Cinema One of the Brighton Odeon on Tuesday, one female fan did actually scream).

No, "hysterical" behaviour is behaviour in which perception and judgment are subverted by an emotion of whose grip the patient is often unaware at the time.

The pathology of mass or group hysteria is well documented, although the means by which it is transmitted are hardly understood. It can spread like fire through a crowd, packed together. Spread (by the written or broadcast word) through a group who are physically dispersed, like what we are pleased to call the British Intellectual Establishment, the fuse is slow, the effect milder.

But at its most extreme, the raw power of mass hysteria can be staggering. Whole assembly halls full of schoolgirls start fainting; battalions of Zulu warriors can rush, whooping into gunfire; entire congregations of the devout can fall to the ground in a shaking fit of religious enthusiasm. I sensed a kind of group hysteria in the House of Commons during the Falklands War when, for many months, things that were true — or at least arguable — simply could not be spoken.

I sensed it, more fitfully, among Tory colleagues in the noon of Margaret Thatcher's ascendancy. Things were believed which were not believable. Critical faculties were suspended and the impossible became, for a while, credible. Germans who were alive during the Third Reich will understand me: those who remember the McCarthy era or Eva Peron will understand too. But mass hysteria is not an intrinsically right-wing (or left-wing) phenomenon. It is not an ideological phenomenon at all, but emotional. We may be moved to good or ill — to burn witches, burn books, save cities or idolise princesses — but what moves us is a kind of madness.

And it is not rememberable. This is important to know about mass hysteria: that although the actions provoked can be recorded — although the flowers at Buckingham Palace can be pressed and preserved,

although the things we are led to believe may be written down and filed away — the feelings which inspired them can never be recalled. That is why the bare record of what people will do can be so baffling. Nobody can remember the hysteria itself.

"We've rejoined the same planet as the rest of the world," Robin Cook told the conference yesterday. No, Foreign Secretary, we've temporarily departed it. Until we return, I shall keep the memory from the Brighton Odeon of nearly one thousand people applauding a screen.

I shall record the fact that two million people in Britain who did not vote for Tony Blair now believe that they did; that a British press which had laughed John Major to scorn, when he mentioned motorway cones, offered not a giggle when on Tuesday the Prime Minister told an applauding audience of his concern that some teenagers spit. I shall photocopy the headlines about the "giving age" and the editorials about a change in "new Britain's" soul, and pencil a marginal note that some months previously Tony Blair had won a million and a half fewer votes than John Major did in 1992. I shall make a little list of promises Mr Blair made on Tuesday: "end boom and bust", "borrow only for investment" and "strengthen family life".

I shall bury in a sealed time-capsule his printed vows to create "a Britain where no child goes hungry, the young are employed, and the old are cherished and valued to the end of their days", to make Britain "the new power of the information age", "the best-educated and schooled country in the world", "a model 21st-century nation, a beacon to the world", to end the common agricultural policy and lead the world into a crusade against global warming, and to usher in the "giving age". And I shall record my bemusement, not that one more politician with a cold talent for making people feel warm should say these things, but that for a short period, we were disposed to believe him.

And I shall look again at my five mugs, shut my eyes, breathe deeply, book a holiday somewhere with a comparatively vigorous intellectual life, such as South Dakota... and wait. "Almost irresistible at the moment," said Melbourne, "but transient and succeeded by weakness."

Philip Howard



Alas poor Banksie, a fellow of infinite jest

Of course Tony Banks's joke about the Tories having elected a focus as their leader and now wishing to abort it is in shocking bad taste. So, to a lesser or greater degree depending upon your sensitivities, were his other cracks about abortion, Peter Mandelson featuring as the Prince of Darkness, and Michael Portillo as television presenter compared to Pol Pot joining the *Teletubbies*. When the Prime Minister asked him if he would like the post of Minister for Sport in the Government, Mr Banks claims (unpersuasively) that he replied: "Is the Pope a Catholic?" And he ad-libbed aside to his guffawing audience: "(I thought that would stand me in very good stead with Cherie and the friends of the Brompton Oratory)".

That was good going, at one meeting to have outraged taboos about death, Roman Catholics, tragedy, religion, sex, women and the Beloved Leader of his party. So Mr Banks has been reprimanded and exiled to outer darkness, or at any rate to Bratislava, to watch his team, the Blues, hitting the crossbar as often as his jokes do.

But of course Mr Banks should not be sacked for his bad jokes. They seem funny to some because down in the slag they contain outrageous diamonds of truth. And Mr Banks fills the ancient and useful role of court (Establishment) jester. Professional fools, licensed to abuse and poke fun at the high and mighty, have flourished from the Egyptian pharaohs until the 19th century. They have made their living from disrespectful and distasteful abuse of their masters in societies as diverse as those of the Aztecs and the courts of medieval Europe. At the Saturnalia they took over the cruel potentocracy of Rome for a topey-turvy weekend. But, after that, the plebs and slaves were penned back in their places, and came the whips and axes for bad jokes.

Will Sommers, the real jester at the Tudor court, was the live model for Yorick, Feste, Touchstone and the other mirthful fools in Shakespeare, who sang sweet songs and told truths as well as playing the lute. The Fool in *King Lear* is wiser than the kings and courtiers, and gets whipped for his jokes. The official post of court jester has been abolished. But Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, unwittingly and unwittingly, performs it for the Tory party. And Tony Banks does the business much better for new Labour. For rude jokes are a safety valve for the rude masses in all societies. And in the humourless tyrannies of the Nazis and the Communists, they were punished by worse outrage than headlines demanding the sacking of the jokers.

New Labour, new Britain, new rhetoric, but no old jokes. The high-brow sermon at the Labour Party conference has been fulsome, in its proper meaning: if you like that sort of thing, polished to pseudogloss by soundbite-merchants and headline-managers, and as full of moral uplift as the pitch by a born-again television evangelist. And those born-again are twice as tiresome second time around. You expect Elmer Gantry to appeal for big brown notes in a bucket, and true believers to writhe on the floor. The young may just have heard of a Beatie, but a beacon? That is as antique a metaphor as a candle blowing in the wind, and surrounded by windbreaks and butlers with boxes of matches.

The new oratory goes in for alliteration of the genteel c-words: compassionate, caring, community, choice. Compassionate with a hard edge sounds like the sort of chocolate that gets squeezed in the box and rejected. But trendy "new" and patriotic "Britain" score even better than the compassionate in the soft new soap-opera speech. Those flashing eyes and quivering lower lip may charm the feather-headed. But enthusiasm and charm in speech is usually proportionate to vacuity in ideas. What the new rhetoric and any hot gospel are desperately short of are humour, irony, wit and some bad-boy bad taste. Why no heckling? Because evangelists want to be loved, by everyone. Moral uplift runs on a tide of treacle with only wet, self-deprecating jokes.

Machiavelli advised ambitious politicians to avoid humour at all costs, because it causes only trouble. So it does. But Tony Banks is more useful than an ambitious courtier. He adds intelligence and bad taste to the people's love-in.

Final chord

A DELICATE dispute over the resting place for Sir Georg Solti, the Hungarian-born conductor who died last month aged 84, has arisen between his widow and Hungary. His diplomats have expressed "considerable interest" in "who will have the honour of finally interring Sir Georg". They want to lay him to rest in Budapest. Lady Solti wants to bury her husband, who became a British citizen in 1971 and was knighted shortly afterwards, in his adopted homeland.

The conductor was cremated (unusually for a Jew) and the ashes are still with his widow at their North London home. And Lady Solti, his second wife, who met Sir Georg when she interviewed him more than 30 years ago, is determined not to let them go.

But the Hungarians are not to be deflected. "He is one of our all-time greats. He ranks with Bartok," says the new Hungarian Ambassador, Gabor Szentivanyi, stressing the need to "bring him home". One of his staff has a blunter approach: "He belongs to us."

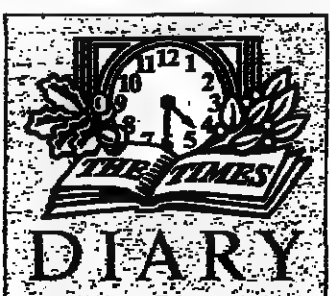
Mr Szentivanyi is now engaged in "careful" discussion with Lady Solti, although a decision is being held off until after the three Solti memorial services planned for Chicago, Munich and London. "We need time to work these things out," says an aide to Lady S.

"We should proceed as he would have wanted — marking his memory within the spirit of his wishes. We are moving with great care."

● *SUCH* an upstanding chap, the Prime Minister. Late the other night I found him and his wife Cherie studying a bracing set of questions displayed on a computer screen. "What would be your answer to number three?" I asked. This inquired of the PM whether he "would like to be dipped in honey and thrown to the lesbians". "Probably not," he replied before a mischievous pause. "But I would have to think about it."

Lion's roar

STAND by for a scorching literary wrangle between Martin Amis and John Updike. Bruised by a batch of blunt notices for *Night Train*, his new novella, Amis is to harangue the offending reviewers — and Mr Updike is first on his hitlist.



Most of the damning verdicts — "tosh" being a typical judgment — might be dismissed as mere sniping. Not so the scathing Updike review, coming as it does from Amis's beloved literary America. "I need to know why they felt critical," he explains. "It is important for me to talk through the points they made and argue it out with them."

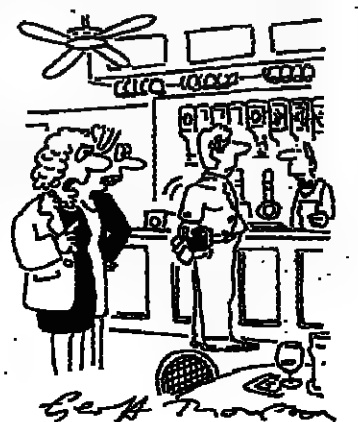
Updike's review could certainly prompt some arguing. Admitting to "hating it" in the first line, Updike went on to give reasons, which included "the unmentionable way the plot proceeds... the solution of the mystery and the point of the book." Take cover.

Capital scrap

THIS could be revenge served as a dish so cold it will be frozen. More

than 16 years after Lord McIntosh was ousted as leader of the GLC by a young Ken Livingstone, he is limbering up for a rematch. He wants to become Mayor of London — as, apparently, does Ken.

As Deputy Chief Whip in the Lords, Andrew McIntosh well remembers the coup of 1981. As the victorious Labour leader, he was supplanted by the leftist Livingstone. He believes he could unite the capital more than Red Ken or Blue Jeffrey (Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare). Then there is the matter of revenge. Says a friend: "He has had to wait a long time."



There goes Tony Banks, putting his mouth where his mouth is

Naked cheek at the café

WHEN Naomi Campbell made an impromptu late-night visit to the construction site shortly to become her London Fashion Café, she was nonplussed to find her builders dancing naked on the stage.

"She hit the roof," says a culprit. "She screamed 'what on earth is going on?' or words to that effect. Odd, really, when Miss Campbell spends many working hours in decidedly economical dress."

Café life has not been easy for Naomi. With partners Elle Macpherson and Claudia Schiffer, she is said to be embroiled in a rent dispute with the landlord of the Fashion Café, New York. The London launch has not gone swimmingly, either. It was to open during London Fashion Week, but for some reason building work has run over schedule...

● A NOVEL plan to shore up the Empire from Bernice Grant: why not follow the French and allow our remaining Caribbean territories to elect their own Westminster MPs? You cannot call it colonialism, he insists. Certainly not.

● WHO says all Labour delegates embrace the new order? The much-



Campbell: double standards

trumpeted blue mugs emblazoned with the comforting slogan "Tough on crime" have been withdrawn from sale at a conference shop — owing to lack of demand.

JASPER GERARD



BLIND JUSTICE

Straw's action on race undermines his other efforts

New Labour is nowhere more conservative than in Home Affairs. Jack Straw's social conservatism is, however, not in the Tory tradition but authentically of his own party. The predecessor to whom he is closest is not Michael Howard, nor Douglas Hurd, but James Callaghan. It was Lord Callaghan of Cardiff who attempted to check the liberalism of the Sixties when he promised to "call a halt to the rising tide of permissiveness" and his traditional working-class morality finds an echo in Mr Straw's deployment of new legislation to maintain public order. Mr Straw's stance is also in tune with a reaction in Labour ranks against the corrupted liberalism of the Left in the Eighties. The change was nowhere more apparent than in the loud applause Mr Straw earned yesterday for his championing of the police, unlikely heroes of any Eighties Labour conference.

The Labour Party has not, however, altogether abandoned the gesture politics of that decade. There is one government proposal flourished by Mr Straw yesterday which is, regrettably, more politically correct than politically astute and although conceived from the noblest of motives it is likely to prove counter-productive in practice. The Home Secretary's plan to introduce a new category of offence for racially motivated violence is a misuse of the criminal justice system. The Government's determination to tackle prejudice is admirable but the Home Secretary should have rejected the lobbying of the Commission for Racial Equality whose determination to effect legislative change will only work against the interests of those whom it wishes to defend.

Introducing an explicitly racial element into criminal cases in the manner Mr Straw proposes could turn trials into evidential minefields and ideological battlegrounds. The experience of America, most recently in the O. J. Simpson case, shows how dangerous and distorting it can be when questions of racial motivation dominate a trial.

REVOLT IN ROME

Italy's Communists will determine Prodi's fate

A mere 18 months after the forces of the Left assumed power in Italy for the first time in 50 years, fratricide threatens their continued survival. From the moment of its election, the centre-left coalition led by Romano Prodi contained the seeds of its destruction. The consistent objective of Signor Prodi's administration has been early Italian entry into European monetary union. But the Government's parliamentary majority was dependent on the votes of the Rifondazione Comunista — perhaps the most unashamedly Marxist entity on either side of the old Iron Curtain. That party was always an extremely improbable partner in the quest for fiscal rectitude.

Until this week, Italian politics has survived the apparent incompatibility between Signor Prodi's ambitions and Communist hopes. The Government did manage to pass a budget last year that transformed Italy's prospects of reaching the Maastricht convergence criteria. It achieved this only through a very substantial increase in taxation (of which the Communists approved) rather than an overdue assault on state spending. That formula has proved impossible to repeat. Signor Prodi has proposed expenditure cuts of 25 trillion lire (€9 billion) in the current budget. This includes a 5 trillion lire reduction in welfare entitlements, especially pensions. It is on such provisions that his political prospects now depend.

These measures are essential for Italy's long-term financial credibility. If anything, the reforms outlined by Signor Prodi are insufficiently radical. Expenditure on pensions at present constitutes an astonishing 17.2 per cent of GNP. Whether Italy is in or out of EMU such a commitment cannot be sustained. But even the rather incremental change suggested has proved too much for

the Communists. Their core constituency is located disproportionately among the elderly and trade unionists. They have declared their opposition to Signor Prodi's "budget for Europe" and in so doing have triggered a political crisis. This must be resolved in little more than seven days.

There are three possible outcomes to this impasse — none of which is attractive. The Communists could carry through their threat and — despite the undoubted risks involved — throw out the administration. An exceptionally unpredictable election campaign would then follow. Alternatively, the Government could seek support from the several parties of the Centre-Right. Such an arrangement permitted Italian troops to be deployed in Albania earlier this year despite Communist objections. On this occasion, though, the Opposition would certainly demand a much higher price for its support. Those conditions might include the resignation and replacement of Signor Prodi.

The final and most likely option is a belated compromise. It is hard to envisage a fresh budget formula that would both command full Communist support and be deemed sufficiently rigorous by the financial markets. The Government must endure but the chances of German public opinion and hence Helmut Kohl supporting initial Italian membership of EMU would recede. At some stage, Signor Prodi will either have to propose additional spending reductions or abandon outright his stated European policy. If the collapse of his premiership or the administration does not come next week it would follow at that point. In Italy, the unity of the Left and the advance of monetary union appear irreconcilable. This conundrum deserves consideration in London as well as Rome.

NOT FOR GIRLS

Boxing is barbaric enough already

Most people take the same view of female pugilism as Dr Johnson once took of female preaching, "like a dog walking on his hinder legs, not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all". Yet in gyms and sports clubs all over Britain, women have been training as pugilists for years, keeping in peak physical form with punchbags and pads, skipping ropes and speedballs. The boxer's training offers an unsurpassed all-round workout. As such it is not to be discouraged.

But ever since its foundation more than a century ago, the Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) has banned women from fighting competitively in Britain. This week it lifted that ban. Two 13-year-old girls — Emma Brammer and Andrea Prime — prepared themselves to create sporting history by fighting in a Stoke-on-Trent nightclub. But the pressure of adverse publicity led to yesterday's cancellation of the match. The cancellation was appropriate. For adult women to fight may seem violent and unpalatable, but to allow teenagers — too young to vote or drink — to risk themselves in the boxing ring is barbaric.

Pugilism dates back to the ancient Olympic arenas where men sparred — often to the death — with iron-studded gloves. In

Britain, until the end of the 19th century, fighters competed in bare-knuckled bouts. But the first written rules of boxing were published in 1743 by Jack Broughton who encouraged the wearing of "muffles" on the fists. Since then the history of boxing has largely been the history of attempts to regulate it — to limit the damage which it can do. This is never more the case than today as male pugilists increasingly abandon artistry for raw power. Almost certainly, if such a sport were invented today it would not gain Olympic licence or public approval.

To encourage female boxing now is folly. The physical risks of this sport — cut eyes, detached retinas, concussion and brain damage — have long been acknowledged. With women there is the added danger of injury to delicate breast tissues. Most of the ABA's medical advisers as well as the British Boxing Board of Control strongly oppose the decision to permit women to fight competitively.

There are hundreds of different sports to enjoy. Almost all are better suited to the female frame and strength than boxing. Emma Brammer and Andrea Prime have grace, skill and athleticism. They have an admirable energy and motivation. These would be more safely and productively channelled into another arena.

Who should bear the cost of an educated workforce?

From Dr Clive Coen

Sir, I regard the Government's intention of turning students into customers (reports, October 1; leading article, October 2) as perilous.

The academic record of this country has been largely based on early specialisation by a small segment of society during a short undergraduate career. A welcome expansion in university attendance has been achieved in recent years. Moreover, long-awaited plans to broaden the sixth-form curriculum are at last being discussed. It will soon be apparent that our undergraduate courses are unsuitably specialised for the post-"baccalaureat" generation.

In the face of international competition we shall therefore need to extend these courses to ensure that a sufficiently high level of specialisation is eventually achieved. Yet, ironically, the notion that the beneficiary of university education is the individual investor, rather than society as a whole, is bound to diminish the opportunity for development in this area.

Student investors will naturally favour courses that bear fruit rapidly, and since most of them will have modest means, they will resist the proposition that the investment be extended. It thus seems clear that students with above average financial resources will colonise those undergraduate courses which are essentially academic (as opposed to vocational) and postgraduate degrees, which will be a prerequisite for the highly paid professions.

Our universities, already in transition, must not be allowed to regress through market forces into later-day versions of polytechnics or ivory towers. They are national resources and should be sustained by raising income tax. Breaking its promise not to do so might be more popular than the Government imagines.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE COEN,
King's College London,
Biomedical Sciences Division,
Strand, WC2,
October 1.

From Dr George Boulos

Sir, The present Government was elected on, amongst other pledges, the promise of a commitment not to raise taxes for those of us in the higher income bracket.

Is it not obvious from its intention to charge tuition fees to students from such families while exempting those in the low-income bracket that this is their backdoor way to levying more taxes on the higher earners? Indeed, is it not a very shrewd manoeuvre to increase the fee contribution year after year while pretending to shield the less able?

If, as Mr Blunkett stated, the justification for introducing the contribution lies in the premise that those fortunate enough to obtain the necessary education to enable them to repay back the loan upon employment should consider it a justifiable burden, why then should it matter whether they come from high or low-earning families?

The obvious deduction must be that this is Labour's scheme to get back to its old ways of ever increasing the burden of taxation on the professionals.

Yours truly,
GEORGE BOULOS,
Tilhurst Surgery,
Tylers Place, Pottery Road,
Tilhurst, Reading, Berkshire.
September 29.

From the Warden of
Glenalmond College

Sir, Like most of my profession, and many outside it, I am very much against the charging of fees to university students. Mr Blair's remarks on the subject yesterday only served to highlight a serious logical inconsistency in his party's thinking on this matter.

We are told that fees will be charged, that loans will be given, but that students from low-income families will be exempt. Why?

If it is because, as has been argued, graduates' incomes in later life are

higher and they should pay back some of the cost of their training, then why exempt anyone? If it is because well-off parents are expected to pay for their adult children's university education, why not say so?

That universities must be funded and that the old system was unsustainable is well known, but let us at least have clarity about who should pay and why. Better still, let us spread the cost, through income tax, amongst all those people in society who could afford it since it is society as a whole that will benefit from a well educated workforce.

Incidentally, those future graduates whose income prospects are so much better as a result of their education would, in their turn, pay a correspondingly higher part of the cost of educating future generations.

Yours faithfully,
IAN G. TEMPLETON,
Warden, Glenalmond College, Perth,
October 1.

From the Reverend Stephen Jones

Sir, In arguing that we should "not shed tears for those who are going to earn a great deal more because of the degree they get" in order to justify the imposition of £1,000 tuition fees on university students (report, September 29), David Blunkett overlooks two undoubted facts.

First, politicians of all parties have been telling us for years that the "country" needs more better-educated young people, and it therefore follows that it is not only the students who benefit from their education. Secondly, the gaining of a degree does not necessarily guarantee earning "a great deal more".

The philistinism of the previous administration has certainly taken root. What happened to education for its own sake?

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN JONES,
30 North Road,
Carnforth, Lancashire.
September 29.

es' Conference showed that help with legal problems was the service they most wanted expanding. The time they spend on such problems is time not spent on educating their pupils. Parents say that their top priority in choosing a school is good discipline, and yet that job is being made more difficult and time-consuming by the intervention of lawyers.

Our schools strive manfully, under market pressure, to deliver the best possible academic results. The extra pressure which comes from the threat of legal action if results are not good will hardly attract more able people to a teaching profession already experiencing serious recruitment problems.

Yours faithfully,
VIVIAN ANTHONY
(Secretary),
The Headmasters' and
Headmistresses' Conference,
130 Regent Road, Leicester.
September 23.

RA exhibition

From Dr Justin Seabrook

Sir, The objection by Mrs Eva Bellin (letter, September 29) to the painting of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, surrounded by pictures of female genitalia in the Royal Academy Sensation exhibition seems as illogical to me as the arguments put forward by critics of the portrait of Myra Hindley.

I have seen neither picture and have no great desire to do so, but censorship is not an answer to offensive material. All we may reasonably ask is that those displaying such art take sensible steps to warn potential visitors that the exhibits may upset them.

We are not a "Christian society"; we are a multicultural, multi-faith society. No interest group (religious or secular) should have the right to impose their particular beliefs and prejudices on others. It is intolerance rather than modern art that is damaging contemporary society.

Yours faithfully,
JUSTIN SEABROOK,
9 Collingwood Road,
Northampton.
September 29.

London fashion

From Miss Karen Vincett

Sir, While I commend your recent coverage of London Fashion Week, I feel compelled to express my utter disappointment at the generally poor and superficial media coverage of this spectacular event. Television broadcasts have been few and far between and, to say the least, light-hearted.

But fashion is not meaningless fun. As we prove our own artistic and design talent to the rest of the world, London Fashion Week heralds our success in playing host to no fewer than 53 designers and their shows.

The quest begins with educating the public to recognise that this is a serious industry. The effects of it reach everyone.

Fashion is big business. London is the place to be.

Yours sincerely,
KAREN VINCEIT
(Fashion design graduate),
14 Pipers Croft,
Dunstable, Bedfordshire,
October 1.

Replanting after the Great Storm

From the Chairman of the
Conservation Committee
of the Garden History Society

Sir, May I comment on your report of September 26, "Given time, Mother Nature heals all", marking the approach of the tenth anniversary of the Great Storm of October 16, 1987.

Although the natural flora and fauna of England are important to us, they are not as significant as the English countryside as an aesthetic achievement. Generations of land-owners have improved our landscape to answer their sense of beauty, in particular in parks: these contribute enormously, despite being only 2 per cent of England's land area. Today's picturesque improves include the Government itself, principally through the Countryside Commission.

The Great Storm was a disaster and an opportunity at the same time. English Heritage set up a scheme for the repair of storm damage in "outstanding" parks, whilst the Countryside Commission set up Task Force Trees to deal with other parks and the wider countryside. Having been responsible for the English Heritage scheme, I can say that its priorities were as follows:

1. To persuade owners of important historic parks and gardens that specialist advice is needed for their conservation.
2. To promote the philosophical and practical understanding of park and garden conservation by consultants.
3. To put trees back in the ground (seen as the necessary political justification for spending public money).

The English Heritage scheme was (as far as I know) the first one worldwide specifically for historic parks and gardens. It and the Task Force Trees work afterwards became the springboard for the present Countryside Stewardship scheme run by MAFF and the Heritage Lottery Fund's urban parks programme.

I regret the impression given by your report that the work of Task Force Trees was a waste of time. Of course it was not. The Great Storm should be reviewed holistically, so that we may learn the lessons of conserving the beauty and complexity of the countryside in the face of great natural disasters.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID JACQUES,
Chairman, Conservation Committee,
The Garden History Society,
77 Cowcross Street, EC1,
September 26.

Drink and health

From Mr Gerald Vinesstock

Sir, Since the latest advice (reports, September 26, 29) is that we abandon eating red meat (cancer), white meat (E.coli poisoning) and I have already given up fruit and vegetables (pesticides), the bulk in my diet now consists of the recommended solitary as-piririn each day.

Fortunately consumption of red wine is still permitted (letters, September 20, 25, 30), but can Dr Stuttaford tell me how many bottles I require to consume each day in order to achieve a balanced diet?

Yours faithfully,
GERALD VINESTOCK,
2 Overhead Cottages,
Capernwray, Carnforth, Lancashire,
September 30.

From Mr A. W. L. Frenzels-Fraser

Sir, Could Dr Stuttaford, whose views on drink are known to all, tell us what he eats — if anything.

Yours faithfully,
A. W. L. FRENZELS-FRASER,
Squirrels' Run,
Chalk Lane, East Horsley, Surrey,
October 1.

Poet's plight

From Mr Neil Curry

Sir, Your obituary (September 26) implies that the poet Edwin Brock was not close to his mother. I don't know how he felt when he was ten, but in later life he was very fond of her, and especially of her malapropisms.

When things were going badly for him once, she consoled him with the words: "Never mind, son. It's just a phrase you're going through."

Yours faithfully,
NEIL CURRY,
2 Trinity Gardens,
Ulverston, Cumbria,
September 26.

North and South

From Mr Jim Wills

Sir, In your leading article on regional accents ("Brum's the word", October 1) you say that "in his constituency of Sedgfield [Tony Blair] drops 'ayes' and other Northumberland idioms in his speech".

I am puzzled as to why Mr Blair should drop Northumberland idioms into his speech when Sedgfield's in Co Durham. It is my experience that the people of Durham have almost as much love for the natives of Northumberland as they have for those of Westminster (wherever that is).

Yours etc,
J. WILLS,
14 Kirk Street,
Sillington, Stockton-on-Tees,
October 2.

Trial by jury

From Mr Nicholas Wood

Sir, I note with alarm that the right to trial by jury may be done away with for a number of "middle-ranking" crimes, such as theft, handling stolen goods and some sexual offences" (report, September 27). Were this to happen, the judicial system will be whittled down even further to a system of summary justice.

Justice is far too important for changes to be advocated merely for political or financial expediency. The effect of even a minor case, such as stealing a bottle of water, can have catastrophic consequences on defendants' lives, most of whom will naturally prefer the ruling of 12 people to summary justice.

The jury system also provides a constant public check on the excesses of the judiciary and the police. Do we really want sharia courts, or justice dispensed in the back of a police van?

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS WOOD,
20 South Hill Park Gardens, NW3,
September 27.

Information 'game'

From Mr Alastair Campbell

Sir, Given that you had the full contents of my letter to Departmental Heads of Information (report, October 2), I was surprised at the unbalanced account of its contents.

While it is true that I said the Government Information Service could "raise its game", I did so in the context of explaining that the new Government does not see communications as an add-on, but as central, and therefore a real opportunity for the G.I.S. I also paid tribute to the role of the Civil Service press officers, both in handling the transition and in the success of the Government so far.

Yours faithfully,
ALASTAIR CAMPBELL,
(Chief Press Secretary),
10 Downing Street, SW1,
October 2.

Death of Clive

From Sir John Sykes

Sir, Your report ("Moody boy who became true hero of empire", September 29) was marred by a somewhat morbid inaccuracy. Clive did not shoot himself, although he is sometimes supposed to have attempted to do so on an early stage of his career. To quote from a letter from my ancestor Sir Francis Sykes, a close friend and ally, to Warren Hastings, written less than a month after Clive's death:

A few days ago died greatly lamented our friend Lord Clive, and the way ill, with his usual Complaint, Fits and Spasms, yet between you & me there is not a doubt but he shortened his life by a Pinkie and throwing it into the Jugular Vein.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SYKES,
Kingsbury Croft, Kingsbury Street,
Marlborough, Wiltshire,
September 29.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 2: Members of the voluntary organisations who gave their services at the time of the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales and who helped with the collection and distribution of flowers laid by members of the public were invited to The Queen this afternoon.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 3: The Princess Royal today carried out the following engagements in Phoenix, Arizona, United States of America.

Her Royal Highness this morning opened the High Technology Conference at Motorola University.

The Princess Royal later toured the Garfield and Colorado Neighbourhood Community Policing programme.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Luncheon given by the Governor of Arizona (The Honorable Jane Dee Hull) at the Executive Building of State Capitol.

The Princess Royal later opened the British Event, part of the UK/Arizona Festival for retail shops, at the Phoenix Fashion Park.

Her Royal Highness this evening attended the Mayor of Phoenix's Reception given by the Mayor of Phoenix at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The Princess Royal afterwards attended a Dinner at the Phoenix Art Museum for supporters of the UK/Arizona Festival.

Her Royal Highness finally departed Phoenix for London.

KENSINGTON PALACE
October 2: The Duke of Gloucester, President, British Consultants Bureau, was received by the Governor of Aden (Mr. Taha Ahmad Chahim) this morning.

Later His Royal Highness visited the Church of St. John the Baptist and subsequently laid a Wreath at the Commonwealth War Graves Memorial Cemetery, the Republic of Yemen.

The Duke of Gloucester later visited the ancient water dams, Tawila Tanks, and afterwards opened the new offices of the British Council in Aden.

This afternoon His Royal Highness attended a Luncheon given by the Governor of Aden at the Diplomatic Club and later laid a Wreath at the Silent Valley Military Cemetery.

Afterwards The Duke of Gloucester toured the harbour by boat and this evening attended a Dinner given by the Aden Chamber of Commerce.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
October 2: The Duke of Kent, Patron, the American Air Museum in Britain, this morning left Gatwick Airport, London, for Dallas, Texas, United States of America.

His Royal Highness this evening attended a fund-raising Dinner at the Hotel Crescent Court, Dallas.

Captain Dominic Hampshire is in attendance.

Royal engagement

Princess Margaret, as President, the NSPCC, will visit the society's Norfolk Child Protection Team at 246 High Street, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth at 3.00.

Service dinner

HAC
Major D. Ide-Smith, President of the Honourable Artillery Company Mess Club, presided at a dinner held last night at the HAC House, WO2 Sir Christopher Walford, Field Marshal Lord Vincent of Coblenz, Master Gunner Sir James Park, and the Earl of Selborne, FRs, also spoke.

Baroness Ludford

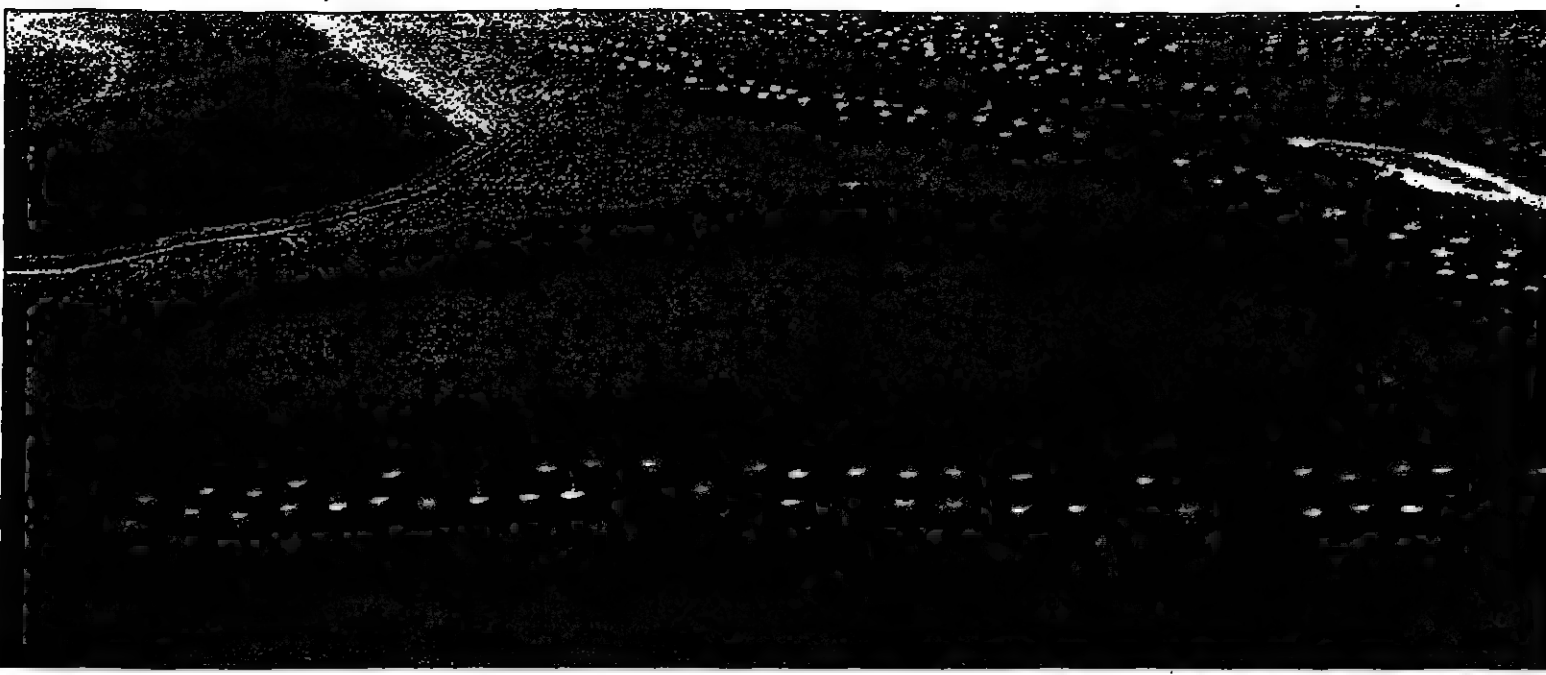
The life barony conferred upon Miss Sarah Ann Ludford has been granted by the name, style and title of Baroness Ludford, of Clerkwell in the London Borough of Islington.

Baroness Fookes

The life barony conferred upon Dame Jane Evelyn Fookes has been granted by the name, style and title of Baroness Fookes, of Plymouth in the County of Devon.

Elect

Mr Tiel Chandler to be President of the British Veterinary Association.



For sale: Samphire Island, Essex, in the estuary of the River Blackwater, ringed by moored boats and half-submerged at high tide

Your private island, and a title too, for £70,000

By JOANNA BALE

AN UNINHABITED island haunted by the ghosts of exiles murdered by smugglers 300 years ago is up for sale.

The 70-acre Samphire Island in the River Blackwater, Essex, is being offered for £70,000 with a Lordship of the Manor title granted by Henry VIII. Half-submerged at high tide, it takes its name from edible sea asparagus that grows there.

It lies in the estuary of the river between the yachting villages of West Mersea and Tollesbury, once feuding fishing communities whose rivalry was made famous by the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould in his classic Victorian thriller *Mehala*.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the river was a popular haunt of smugglers who used flat-bottomed boats to bring contraband ashore in the dozens of tiny creeks and inlets along the banks of the remote estuary.

Local legend has it that a group of exiles were murdered and their bodies buried in the mud when they stumbled on a gang of smugglers. Today yachtsmen moor off its shores and the only visitors are the occasional bird-watcher or wildflower.

References to Samphire Island, also known locally as Sunken Island, go back to the Norman Conquest and it was also mentioned in the Domesday Book.

According to the owners, German-based Viadi

Private Islands (VPI), the island has attracted worldwide interest, mainly because with it comes the title of Lord of the Manor of the nearby hamlet of Great Wigborough cum Salcott.

However, the new owner is unlikely to be allowed to set up home on the island as it is in the middle of a site of special scientific interest and close to several important bird and wildlife reserves.

VPI's manager Pedro Arez said: "We have had nearly 70 serious inquiries. I am not surprised at the level of interest; it is a very attractive island with a title. It may not be possible to develop the island but the owner will have mineral rights. There is also a small income from a wildfowl shooting club that currently rents it."

Geneva Caws, QC

A Memorial Service will be held for Geneva Caws, QC, in the Temple Church, Inner Temple, London EC4, on Thursday, October 16, 1997, at 5pm. All are welcome. For further information please telephone the clerk to James Curtis, QC, 0171 583 0410.

Dinner

Hornsey Company
The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, will be the principal guest and presented the 1997 Hornsey Award for Plastic to Professor John Anner of the Ford Motor Company, for equipment which identifies plastics in materials destined for recycling, at the annual dinner held last night at the Marlborough House.

Mr Charles K. Howe, Master, presided, assisted by Mr Jeremy J. Cartwright and Dr Leonard P. Smith, Wardens. Mr Christopher J. Saunders, Headmaster of Lancing College, was the guest speaker.

Luncheon

MM Atlantic Club
Mr John Monks, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Mid Atlantic Club held yesterday at Dartmouth House, Lord Ezra presided.

Reception

Lord Soudley of Swaffham Prior Lord Soudley of Swaffham Prior was the guest of honour at a reception held at the House of Lords on September 18, on behalf of the Biotechnology Association. Guests included key players in the biotechnology sector.

Baroness Fookes

The life barony conferred upon Dame Jane Evelyn Fookes has been granted by the name, style and title of Baroness Fookes, of Plymouth in the County of Devon.

Premium Bonds

The following Premium Bond prize winners were announced yesterday:

£100,000: 36AW 643170, winner has a holding of £2,750 and comes from Wrexham, GORF 124120, £705.

£20,000: 9AW 266948, £20,000, West Yorkshire: 9GZ 084434, £4,200, Tyne & Wear: 74FW 487639, £4,150, Pembrokeshire.

£20,000: 40SZ 251421, £17,012, Essex: 18LF 973255, £20,000, Carmarthenshire: 35GN 036662, £19,505, Essex: 69AF 703001, £10,000, Essex: 37AK 029267, £20,000, Warwickshire: 48ZN 529574, £5,400, Hertfordshire: 62TK 667132, £20,000, Essex: 24HP 009915, £10,000, Kent: 20YB 257120, £5,200, London Borough of Brent: 13MB 138552, £18,400, Cambridgeshire.

£25,000: 66SP 620003, £15,002, West Midlands: 7HL 96851, £2,039, Dorset: 41HB 002995, £2,000, Berkshire: 39AN 183323, £12,170, Hereford and Worcester: 41GW 719942, £10,400, London Borough of Barking: 70BP 710666, £10,150, Oxfordshire: 21CF 926557, £13,526, Devon: 54SK 544893, £10,265, Co Down: 9BZ 324990, £14,000, East Sussex: 66IS 106721, £20,000, Staffordshire: 28HL 454033, £20,000, East Sussex: 3SRZ 744330, £1,700, Co Armagh: 44NT 092765, £10,450, Surrey: 30KN 457153, £20,000, Surrey: 30GN 678363, £19,000, Kent: 54D1 483885, £20,000, Essex: 53TN 65007, £19,995, City of London: 42PT 734248, £4,100, London Borough of Barnet: 22YW 908887, £850, Kent: QGB 844216, £945, Surrey: 34ZT 046494, £722, Kent.

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OBITUARIES

MILNER GRAY

Milner Gray, CBE, graphic designer, died on September 29 aged 97. He was born on October 8, 1899.

Milner Gray helped to invent the British graphic design industry, and in the course of a long life he changed the very perception of design, and trained many of the best practitioners.

As a young man, he was one of the first in Britain to recognise a change of climate, from the fostering of craft traditions around the turn of the century to an emphasis on art and image as crucial to industry. During the 1920s and 1930s he was one of a small group who brought about a revolution in attitudes.

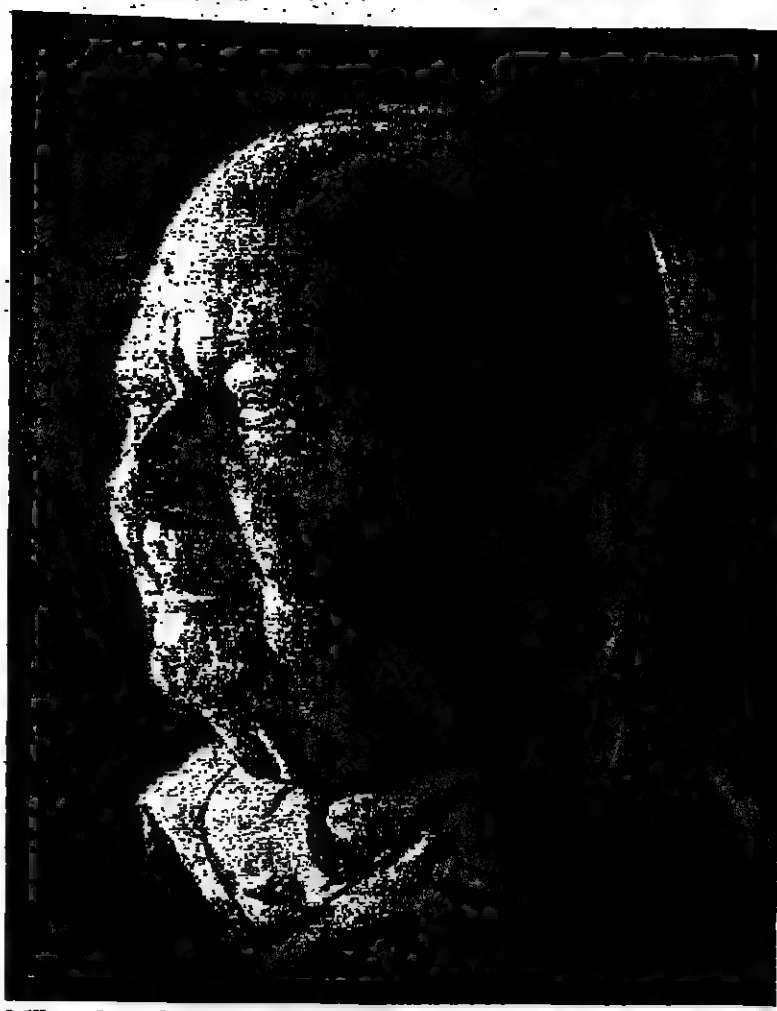
Realising that modern companies and products needed designers just as modern buildings need architects, they set out to formalise the role of the designer. They saw the significance of the ideas emerging from the Bauhaus in Germany, which were challenging conventional design wisdoms and reflecting the age of science and technology. But Gray himself never attempted to ape the attitudes or styles of the Bauhaus. Instead, much of his work drew on traditional ideas that were more suited to the British way of life.

He was a consummate draughtsman, as much at home with the traditional art of heraldry as with new developments in typography. Although he was essentially a graphic designer, he was also accomplished in the design of products, including ceramics, silverware, glass and fabrics. One of his best-known emblems was the Jaeger lettering, still in use.

Milner Cornforth Gray was born in Blackheath at the very end of the last century — and could remember seeing golfers on the heath, wearing red coats. He was educated at Colfe's Grammar School and Goldsmiths' College (where he was later on the visiting staff) before joining the 19th London Regiment during the First World War, and working on camouflage.

In the early 1920s he became half of Bassett-Gray, one of the first group design practices in Britain (it later became the Industrial Design Partnership). This specialisation and concentration of design talent was then unusual, but it was of course followed by many other consultancies. The scale of the industrial design profession today would have astonished its pioneers.

During the 1920s Gray shared a house in Blackheath with Graham Sutherland, who occasionally helped at the practice, designing china and other items. The friendship was to be lifelong, and Sutherland's last portrait, commissioned by the Chartered Society of Designers, is of Gray.



Milner Gray, in Graham Sutherland's last portrait (1980). The two had been friends since they shared a house in the 1920s

Gray, however, was concerned not only with his own work and the success of his partnership: he had the vision to see the importance of setting up an organisation to consolidate the new profession. In 1929 he and a group of fellow designers founded the Society of Industrial Artists, of which he was secretary from 1932 to 1940. He was the only member of the society to be twice elected president (1943-49 and 1966-67).

During the Second World War, he headed the Ministry of Information's exhibitions division, which produced

benign propaganda such as *London Pride*, *Dig for Victory*, *Poison Gas*, *America Marches*, and *The Unconquerable Soul*. At the same time, along with Misha Black and Kenneth Bayes, he was establishing the Design Research Unit, which was to flourish after the war. Their commissions ranged widely, from wine labels to every last detail on the cruise ship *Oriana*, down to the ashtrays. They were also advisers to such major exhibitions as *Britain Can Make It*, *Design at Work* and work for the Festival of Britain with Hugh Casson. In their heyday, when the progress of various projects was discussed in an office forum, Herbert Read was often in the chair.

For the next thirty years, the scope continued to widen, taking in product design, interiors and architectural projects. Gray was especially involved with house-styles and corporate identity programmes for leading companies including ICI, Unilever and British Rail. He directed a project for Watney's to make its pubs into a distinctive family, but was also a consultant for Courage and other breweries. Another of his specialities was the design of cigarette packs, such as Guards, and the use of bogus coats of arms to convey a feeling of authority.

He also produced more formal armorial bearings, for the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Post Office, and in 1976, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, he designed the official emblem for street decorations. Like many designers, Milner Gray was a squirrel. Over the decades he amassed an enormous archive, from which he could produce samples of his and others' drawings for almost any project. Since the 1950s he had lived in the lower part of a vast Palladian ruin.

Always a modest man, he had an infectious and endearing sense of humour, and went on singing word-nimble. His colleagues and friends were only mystified that his achievements should not have been recognised by any higher honour. Perhaps this was due to his well-known mimicry of Queen Victoria, in whose reign he had been born.

He married Gwladys Osborne Pratt in 1934. They had no children.

PROFESSOR BERNARD DIETRICH

Bernard Dietrich, classicist, died from cancer on September 11 aged 69. He was born on April 7, 1928.



BERNARD DIETRICH was a distinguished classical scholar and a leading authority on Minoan and Mycenaean religion, as the several entries under his name in the latest edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* testify.

Born in Berlin, Bernard Clive Dietrich received the traditional thorough German grounding in the classics that was to equip him well for his life's work. After the turmoil of the Second World War, he came to England in 1946, and took a London honours degree at Southampton, to be followed by postgraduate work at University College London.

In 1952 his promise was recognised by his appointment as a fellow in classics and ancient history at St Andrew's College and as part-time lecturer at Sydney University.

In 1955 he became lecturer (and five years later senior lecturer) at the University of the West Indies. Then, at the age of 35, he accepted the chair of classics at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, where he enjoyed 14 happy and successful years.

By 1977, however, he was keen to return to Europe, and took the chair of classics at Aberystwyth, where he was to remain until his retirement in 1995. He was a highly sought-after lecturer at overseas conferences and was much involved in European schemes of inter-university co-operation, being closely linked with the Programme Mentor (Lège), the Revue Internationale de Pluridisciplinaire de la Religion Grecque Antique (Athens and Liège), the International Council of the Centre d'Etude de la Religion Grecque Antique (Athens) and the Programmes Sciences Religieuses (Brussels).

For Dietrich, classics was a way of life. Like the Greeks, he hungered after new insights and he travelled extensively in his quest for knowledge. Like the Greeks, he had a passion for competitive sports, in his case especially squash and tennis; and he had a great love of music and was an accomplished pianist. He also had the sense of wonder of the Greeks in his fondness for

gadgets and computer games; and like the Greeks, he was very much an individualist who liked to do things himself: he was in his element doing odd jobs.

In the best traditions of the classics, he was a rounded, well-balanced, civilised personality.

His many publications included *Death, Fate and the Gods* (1965), *The Origins of Greek Religion* (1974), *A Sense of Guilt* (1980) and *Tradition in Greek Religion* (1986).

He is survived by his wife, Ann, and their three daughters.

PROFESSOR J. F. GARNER

Professor J. F. Garner, environmental lawyer, died on September 2 aged 83. He was born on May 6, 1914.

JACK GARNER was a pioneer in the study and development of environmental law — a subject almost unheard of thirty years ago. Garner was one of a small number of lawyers who in the early 1970s formed a local Solicitors' Ecology Group and later the national Lawyers' Ecology Group. When the UK Environmental Law Association was formed in 1980, it was he who gave the key speech.

His contribution to the awakening of interest in environmental law was acknowledged by the establishment in 1981 of the annual Garner Lecture. Garner's *Environmental Law*, which began life under his editorship as *The Control of Pollution* in 1975, remains a leading work for practitioners in the subject.

John Francis Garner was educated at Bancroft's School, Woodford Wells, and King's College London, where he took a first in law in 1936, proceeding to LL.M. in 1938. He followed his father into local



government, serving articles with the town clerk of Brentford and Chiswick, and was admitted a solicitor in 1940. He then served six years in the army, attaining the rank of major. After holding appointments as deputy town clerk, he was town clerk and clerk of the peace of Andover, 1950-60.

Garner wrote numerous practice works, relating mainly to various aspects of local government law, which ran to many editions. There were also more substantial works: *The Public Control of Land* and *The Law of Sewers and Drains*. He was much teased about the latter, but it is a learned work on a subject of great practical importance, and is still flourishing in its eighth edition.

But Garner hankered after more academic pursuits and, after trying his hand as a part-time lecturer at Southampton University, 1958-60, he was appointed senior lecturer at Birmingham. Here he rapidly made his mark as a law teacher and writer, producing his authoritative *Administrative Law*. The book, on a rapidly growing subject, has undergone many changes and continues in its eighth edition (by Professor Brian Jones) to be a leading work for students.

When a second chair of law was established at Nottingham University in 1964, Garner was appointed Professor of Public Law. It was here that his main work was done. He played a major role in the growth of the law department and in university affairs. Most law teachers are experts in the analysis of case law but Garner had the much rarer gift for expounding the effect of complex statutes in intelligible terms.

He was an enthusiastic comparative lawyer, producing, with Professor Neville Brown, a comparative study of English and French administrative law and participating actively in many overseas conferences. At Nottingham

he was also faculty Dean.

He strove to improve the attractive university campus, where his interests in the environment were much to the fore. The whims of the woodland's saw would bring him running from a law tutorial, peremptorily to stop the felling of a tree until he had ascertained from the surveyor that there was a good reason why it had to go. Somewhat impetuous (he himself said he "went off at half-cock"), he was admired as a completely loyal colleague and teacher.

Soon after his retirement in 1980, Garner lost his sight. A generally impatient man, he bore his affliction with astonishing aplomb. He continued to edit his books, and even (with Brian Jones) to write a new one (*Countryside Law*). After the death of his wife, Margaret, in 1989, he lived alone, but he had a small army of willing helpers whom he marshalled for weeks in advance, with great precision, to read, take him for walks, to social occasions, to church, to plays, concerts and even films. He had hardly a dull moment to the day of his death.

Jack Garner is survived by his daughter, Adrienne, and his son, Peter.

PHILIPPE ROSSILLON

Philippe Rossillon, diplomat and head of the committee for the defence and expansion of the French language, died in Paris on September 6 aged 66. He was born on August 10, 1931.

WHEN President de Gaulle made the defence of the French language one of his diplomatic priorities in the 1960s, he turned to Philippe Rossillon to lead the crusade against the encroachment of English in French-speaking countries. For thirty years, Rossillon, a career diplomat, rode out of Paris like a modern day paladin, seeking to slay the Franglais dragon wherever it was to be found — whether lurking surreptitiously in bars on the tongues of the young, or staging a more open defiance in an apostate educational institution. He conducted linguistic missions for the preservation of the language to Canada, francophone Africa and to European countries where French is spoken as a minority language.

At all times he had backing from French governments, and he was something of a hero within the Gaullist movement. Some of his numerous foreign trips were concerned with straightforward encouragement of local French language activists and attendance at conferences. Others, however, were more controversial, and some had a strongly clandestine element.

In 1968 a year after de Gaulle's inflammatory "Vive le Québec Libre" speech, Rossillon, too, found himself in trouble in Canada as a result of somewhat provocative journeyings through Quebec and Manitoba. Pierre Trudeau, who was Canadian Prime Minister at the time, accused him of being "more or less a secret agent, acting clandestinely and surreptitiously". He was declared *persona non*



grata. Friends said the federal authorities suspected him of organising arms sales to Quebec *indépendantistes*. This charge Rossillon denied although he was happy to admit that he had been campaigning actively for the rights of francophone minorities.

Rossillon graduated from the elite Ecole Nationale d'Administration, and married into the very rich Seydoux family, a Protestant dynasty controlling the Schlumberger oil industry group, the Gaumont and Pathé cinemas, film production, a textile empire and, more recently, the daily newspaper *Libération*. The support of the family fortune, added to that of politicians from de Gaulle onwards, enabled Rossillon to plan his linguistic campaigns

on an international scale, particularly later in his life when he combined his efforts for francophonie with those on behalf of *laïcité*, the much larger world family of speakers of all Romance languages.

Rossillon, whose early career was in the economic division of the French Foreign Ministry, founded a political movement, *Patrie et Progrès*, in 1958, the year de Gaulle returned to power. The movement supported *Algérie Française* and proclaimed the need for a new concept, *Franc-algérie*. After Algerian independence in 1962, many *Patrie et Progrès* activists switched to supporting Quebec separatism and the Walloons in southern Belgium who favoured union with France.

De Gaulle was, in 1966, instrumental in Rossillon's nomination as director of the Haut Comité pour la Défense et l'Expansion de la Langue Française, which he headed for seven years. The Comité gave way to the present Délégation Générale à la Langue Française, attached to the powerful Ministry of Culture.

In the mid-1970s Rossillon created a cultural, or linguistic, division of the Ministry of Co-operation, the main task of which is to oversee French aid to Africa. This provided him with another platform from which to defend the language. The author of two books on de Gaulle and an *Atlas de la Langue Française*, he also wrote *Un milliard de Latins en l'an 2000*. Recently, he increased his estimates, saying that of 900 million speakers of Romance languages in the world, 150 million were francophones. This figure he compared with his own estimate of the number of people speaking English as a first language, which he put at 500 million.

His patriotism led to his naming his two sons Kéber and Marceau (after two distinguished soldiers of the French revolutionary wars), while his support for French speakers in Haiti induced him to adopt two young Haitians. In the 1990s, as president of the movement *Avenir de la Langue Française*, he took advertising companies to court for violating the 1994 law which ruled that no advertisements in France could be published in English only. But when Rossillon took the French branch of Georgia Tech University, which is located in Metz, to court for having an English-only site on the Internet, the judge dismissed the case.

Rossillon is survived by his wife, who worked with him, his two sons and his adopted son and daughter.

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MR. L. HOUSMAN AND THE CENSOR

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir—Without touching upon the question of the total abolition of the Censorship, about which some difference of opinion may exist, we would strongly urge that the rejection of Mr. Laurence Housman's play, without reason assigned, shows clearly the imperative advisability that the judgment of the Lord Chamberlain, in his capacity as Censor of Plays, should be made subject to appeal.

We are, Sir, yours faithfully,

Rudolf Belser, J. Conyngham, R.C. Canon, C. Hendon Chambers, Robert Henry Davies, A. Conant Doyle, J.V. Fennell, James H. Fagan, W.D. Gilbert, Sydney Grundy, Henry Hamilton, Anthony Hope, Jerome K. Jerome, W.A. Maughan, Louis N. Parker, Cecil Raleigh, Alfred Selous, I. Zangwill.

ON THIS DAY

October 3, 1910

Laurence Housman, author and dramatist, brother of A.E. Housman, crossed swords with the Lord Chamberlain, in his capacity as censor, over plays which Housman wrote about aspects of court life. Housman was supported by such prominent figures as W.S. Gilbert, Somerset Maugham and Arthur Conan Doyle.

amous nature of George IV's marriage to Caroline, beyond one single sentence of a dozen words, which already stands historically recorded. That sentence I was never asked by the Censor to delete.

(2) It contains no love-making between Queen Caroline and her reputed lover.

(3) It contains no unpleasant details of a Divorce Court character.

(4) It contains no intended application to the present day, beyond an exposition of the unequal treatment which, under the law of this country, is still meted out to women, both in the Divorce Courts and in Parliament.

(5) It contains no attack on religion, on morals, or on the institution of Monarchy.

(6) It contains no detailed reference to the character and conduct of George IV, except in one passage of the first act, through the trial scene in the House of Lords, where the words are taken without addition from the published records of the time.

If, as I suppose, that scene is the main cause of my condemnation, I can only imagine that the Censor, and behind his back, the Lord Chamberlain, knew so little of the subject with which they were dealing that they believed all Brougham's speeches to be my own; and, having first adorned me with that resplendent compliment, therein found justification for the ban which has been laid upon my play.

I have here stated, for the instruction of the misinformed, all such possible points of objection as occur to me which my play does not contain. But — and herein, perhaps, lies the insuperable ground of my offence — it does contain, and deals throughout with, a situation of shame and agony, for which, without any direct word of reference, the conduct and character of George IV, are shown to be immediately responsible.

I am, Sir, etc.,

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

Kenington, Oct. 1.

THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



ECONOMICS

Anatole Kaletsky
dismisses scares
about joining EMU
PAGE 29



FOCUS

The Times
Festival of Fine
Wine and Food
PAGE 35, 36



SPORT

Wonder dog in
pursuit of
Triple Crown
PAGES 40-48

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
46-47

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY OCTOBER 3 1997

Scardino turns spotlight on disposal of Lazards



Scardino: reviewing activities

By RAYMOND SNODDY
MEDIA EDITOR

MARJORIE SCARDINO, chief executive of Pearson, the media and entertainment group, has identified an eventual split with Lazards, its merchant banking arm, as a strategic goal to make Pearson more focused and raise money for further investments in the media sector.

When Mrs Scardino took over as chief executive of Pearson, whose interests range from Penguin Books and the Financial Times to Thames Television and Madame Tussauds, she made it clear she was reviewing all of the company's activities. The

clear implication was that Pearson would eventually reduce the range of its businesses. In recent weeks Mrs Scardino, a former chief executive of the Economist Group, has made it clear she believed that, in time, a significant group activity should be sold.

City analysts have long called for a narrower focus at Pearson, which has been criticised for its conglomerate feel. Most analysts have assumed that the main target would be Madame Tussauds and Pearson's theme park interests. In fact Mrs Scardino, and the top Pearson management, have become increasingly impressed by the fact that Tussauds

is a unique tourist attraction known all over the world.

In the 18 months there have been major investments, or commitments to invest in all the main Pearson businesses from education and trade books to the Financial Times and television. On Wednesday Pearson announced a \$373 million (£231 million) tender offer for All American Communications, owners and distributors of game shows and serial dramas.

Mrs Scardino has now identified the Lazards interests as a disposal target, although it will not be an easy thing to do and cannot be accomplished in the short term and

may ultimately prove impossible. Pearson owns 50 per cent of Lazard Partners, a limited partnership registered in Delaware but it also has direct stakes in the operating companies Lazard Frères de Paris and New York.

Both Pearson and Lazards have the right to decide to go their own way in particular circumstances, such as a takeover of Pearson. Mrs Scardino will find it difficult to get a top price for Pearson's Lazards interests because there would be essentially only one purchaser — the Lazard partners.

The advantage to Pearson is that last year the company received a pre-

tax contribution from all its Lazard interests of £40.8 million. The merchant bank absorbs little Pearson management time, requires no capital and relations between the two sides are good.

David Verrey, chairman of Lazard Brothers in London, said last night: "Rumours of an imminent divorce are much exaggerated."

However, Mrs Scardino has set herself the public target of doubling the value of Pearson within five years and Lazards is the only piece of the empire that does not fit her strategic goal of creating a world-class information, media and entertainment business.

Barclays calls staff to BZW meeting

By JON ASHWORTH, MICHAEL CLARK AND PAUL DURMAN

EMPLOYEES of Barclays de Zoete Wedd (BZW), the investment banking arm of Barclays, have been summoned to a meeting this morning, at which it is expected to be announced that the firm is being sold or hived off by way of a joint venture.

Shares in the banking group rocketed yesterday on a report in *The Times* of an imminent deal concerning BZW, the future of which has been the subject of fevered speculation in recent months. Commerzbank and Credit Suisse First Boston — the latter with offices in Canary Wharf, where BZW is now based — have been tipped as the most likely candidates. Other potential partners include ING Barings, ABN Amro and Banque Bruxelles Lambert.

The Barclays share price hit an all-time high of £18 before slipping back to close at £17.47, up 25p on the day, in a highly unusual move. BZW traders have been summoned to a meeting at 7.30 this morning. Members of staff have been called back from holiday. Martin Taylor, the Barclays chief executive, is due to address the meeting this morning.

Barclays declined to comment last night, saying: "This is market speculation and rumour and we don't comment on that." Speculation about a possible sale of BZW has been fuelled by a dis-

appointing financial performance by the firm. Barclays has continued to invest in the unit which recently completed a move to its new base in London's Docklands.

BZW has been hit by defections since the arrival last year of Bill Harrison, who joined from Robert Fleming on a package that is worth a reputed £6 million over five years. Patrick O'Sullivan quit as chief operating officer in July to take the helm at Eagle Star, the insurance group. Other defectors include Khalid Rahim, who resigned as managing director of corporate finance in August.

There has been no end to the solutions put forward on BZW's behalf. NatWest Markets, the troubled securities arm of the NatWest banking group, was at one stage put forward as a possible merger candidate, but traditional rivalries between the two made for an improbable match. A flotation of the business has also been put forward as a possible option.

BZW is the least profitable division of Barclays, seeing pre-tax profits slump 29 per cent last year to £204 million. Much of the decline stemmed from a large rise in costs linked to a wave of expensive hirings. These added £45 million to the wages bill. In August, it was disclosed that a £20 million loss in equities derivatives trading had taken its toll of half-year profits at the firm. Operating income fell £24 million to £124 million, prompting a fresh wave of speculation.

BZW's reputation suffered a blow earlier this year, when the firm was formally criticised by the Takover Panel over its conduct during the £782 million bid for Northern Electric. Simon de Zoete, the BZW vice chairman who led the Northern defence, was not present at a panel meeting during which BZW was accused of being selective in its disclosure.

Commentary, page 27
Markets, page 28



Booking in: Ian Martin, the chairman of Unigate, stands to be installed as deputy chairman of WH Smith if Tim Waterstone's bid succeeds

Waterstone to continue with WH Smith bid

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

TIM WATERSTONE, founder of the Waterstone's bookstore chain, vowed yesterday to press on with his £1 billion bid to take over WH Smith, despite receiving a rebuff from the retail group's board.

It emerged yesterday that he is flanked by the SBC Warburg-backed bid by Ian Martin, chairman of Unigate.

Mr Martin, who is also a veteran of Grand Metropolitan, would be installed as

deputy chairman of the WH Smith group and eventually replace Jeremy Hardie as chairman. Mr Waterstone would be chief executive, while all the current WH Smith executives would be given the chance to stay.

Mr Waterstone's advisers were believed to be canvassing shareholder support for his bid. David Manning, of Foreign & Colonial, one of the top eight shareholders, said

that he had not been approached but thought the bid "a bit underwhelming". However, he said that the proposals have put WH Smith "close to being in play" and the management "under a lot more pressure". Smith's shares ended up at 381p.

Mr Waterstone declined to say whether he would either take the bid hostile or improve the terms of his proposals. Analysts speculated that

the initial proposal had been made to test the waters.

Mr Waterstone said the way his proposals had been presented by WH Smith had been unfair. For example, the group's valuation of Dairy & Tom, his new children's shop venture, at £35 million depends on valuing the new company shares at 270p, which he has not done. "They cannot do that and at the same time say we are not offering a premium," he said.

The new shares would be offered to shareholders along with 200p for each WH Smith share.

He said that if he succeeds in his takeover, he would sell much of the group, concentrating on WH Smith retail, Waterstone's Dairy and Tom and the new distribution business.

Waterstone vision, page 29

BT and MCI chiefs aim to save merger

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

THE board of MCI was last night preparing a rescue plan to keep its \$24 billion (£15 billion) merger with British Telecom on track after WorldCom's \$30 billion offer. MCI directors will receive more than \$130 million in bonuses on completion of the BT merger.

Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive and a non-executive at MCI, has consulted MCI executives in Washington in an attempt to outmanoeuvre WorldCom and save his own £500,000 completion bonus. MCI and BT declined to comment and offered no indication

of when they will respond to the biggest takeover bid in corporate history.

MCI shares rose from \$35 to \$36 in New York indicating the increasing likelihood that MCI shareholders will accept WorldCom's \$41-a-share takeover bid. WorldCom's share price rose 5 per cent, making the bid even more attractive and reducing the risk that a share price collapse would undermine the value of its stock swap offer.

BT shares also rose in London ending the day up 17p at 459p. Investors

voiced relief that the dilutive deal is likely to fall through. The company is coming under pressure to return funds to shareholders in the form of a buyback or special dividend.

BT and MCI are believed to be considering offering WorldCom a large stake in Concert, their joint company, of which Sir Peter would be chief executive. The deal would be complicated, involving a renegotiation of the Concert agreement a second time after the 20 per cent price reduction secured by BT this summer. MCI shareholders would also

get a cash payout to compensate them for losing the more lucrative WorldCom offer.

WorldCom has already told BT it could turn its 20 per cent stake in MCI into a 10 per cent stake in the enlarged WorldCom group. Sir Peter is said to view this as unacceptable even though he would get a seat on the WorldCom board.

The MCI directors' bonuses are said to be a key reason for their refusal to accept that WorldCom's offer is likely to win shareholder approval. Documents filed at the Securities and Exchange Commis-

sion show that Bert Roberts, MCI's chairman, will receive \$85 million in cash and shares after Concert's completion. Gerry Taylor, chief executive, will get \$44 million.

Both men have accepted so-called golden handcuffs, keeping them with the new company for three years. Their basic salaries will remain at \$1 million and \$700,000 respectively.

WorldCom, however, is not offering golden handcuffs.

Global dream, page 26
Commentary, page 27

MAID secures offer for US rival

By FRASER NELSON

MAID, the database company founded by Dan Wagner, has become one of the world's largest on-line information groups after securing an undisclosed \$420 million (£261 million) cash bid for Knight-Ridder Information, its US rival.

The takeover, which has been expected since the two companies entered exclusive negotiations last month, was secured after MAID, outside Reed Elsevier, its UK-listed rival, in a blind auction.

Dan Wagner, who will remain chief executive of the enlarged group, said that although KRI last turned in a half-time loss of \$2.79 million both companies will make a profit by the end of next year.

He intends to find around £22 million of cost savings each year through shedding 300 jobs across Europe and the US, and reboosing all the main information centres into one main database in California.

Mr Wagner, who initially approached KRI with the intention of licensing his company's software searching tool to them, said: "The parent company admitted to us it was a bad time to sell, because they had invested a lot, but they needed the money. We have secured a very good price."

The two companies are to be renamed Dialog Group after the merger. MAID shares were suspended at 25p yesterday.

Knight-Ridder, KRI's parent, made the sale to finance its £1 billion acquisition of newspapers from Walt Disney.

Tempus, page 28

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BT may seek deal to save its global dream

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BT may seek to strike a deal with the company that gazed upon its bid for MCI in an effort to salvage its shattered global ambitions.

One option for BT, whose hopes to merge with MCI seem dashed by WorldCom's surprise bid of \$30 billion (£18.5 billion), is to retain a stake in a new WorldCom/MCI and seek to build up its holding and influence. Such a stance may be difficult, especially after the taint from WorldCom on Wednesday that, after MCI, it could look at buying BT. However, WorldCom

has offered an olive branch to BT by suggesting a role in a WorldCom/MCI.

BT is not commenting on a prospective role with WorldCom, but the move would satisfy analysts looking for its commitment to a global strategy. BT's terse statement to the Stock Exchange on Wednesday and its refusal to be drawn on WorldCom's surprise move is seen by some observers as a sign that it is keeping its options open. BT told the exchange: "We have received the material made public today and are considering the issues it raises."

BT has held talks with MCI since the bid was announced, but no BT staff are at the

Washington headquarters. Last night Sir Peter Bonfield, the BT chief executive, whose reputation hangs on a successful conclusion to the MCI saga, faced questions over the company's future at the Labour conference in Brighton, where BT held a reception for MPs. He had flown back from the US, where he had met MCI staff on the day WorldCom's bid disrupted BT's \$24 billion merger with MCI.

Analysts see four options for BT, which has long wanted a transatlantic alliance. The first would see BT keep its 20 per cent of MCI, which would become a 9 per cent WorldCom/MCI stake, and seek to expand its influence.

The second option would see BT casting around for new partners to pursue a global link-up. However, with few suitable candidates, this may not be a powerful strategy.

The third would envisage a fresh attempt at a link with Cable & Wireless, but this is unlikely to win favour with the competition authorities.

Lastly, BT could abandon its global hopes and go for the utility option, operating largely in the UK and returning value to shareholders.

Meanwhile, BT is to part company with the man who crafted its "It's good to talk" campaign. Stafford Taylor, its consumer division managing director, will leave at the end of the year.

TV documentary will highlight Treasury discord

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

GROWING disquiet about the centralisation of power in the hands of the Chancellor's group of special advisers at the Treasury is likely to be highlighted by a television documentary showing next week.

Tuesday's Scottish Television film, *We Are the Treasury*, shows the concern among civil servants about the dominant presence in particular of Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's economic adviser.

Sir Terence Burns, as Permanent Secretary the most senior Treasury civil servant, gives a sense of the culture shock that came with the new arrivals. "They have a set way

of doing things. They are not always the same ways that we have...," he says.

Jill Rutter, who subsequently asked to move from her job as head of the Treasury press office, said: "There is a problem with so much being done informally between the Chancellor, Ed Balls and Charlie Whelan (Mr Brown's spin doctor) and because so much is filtered through Ed."

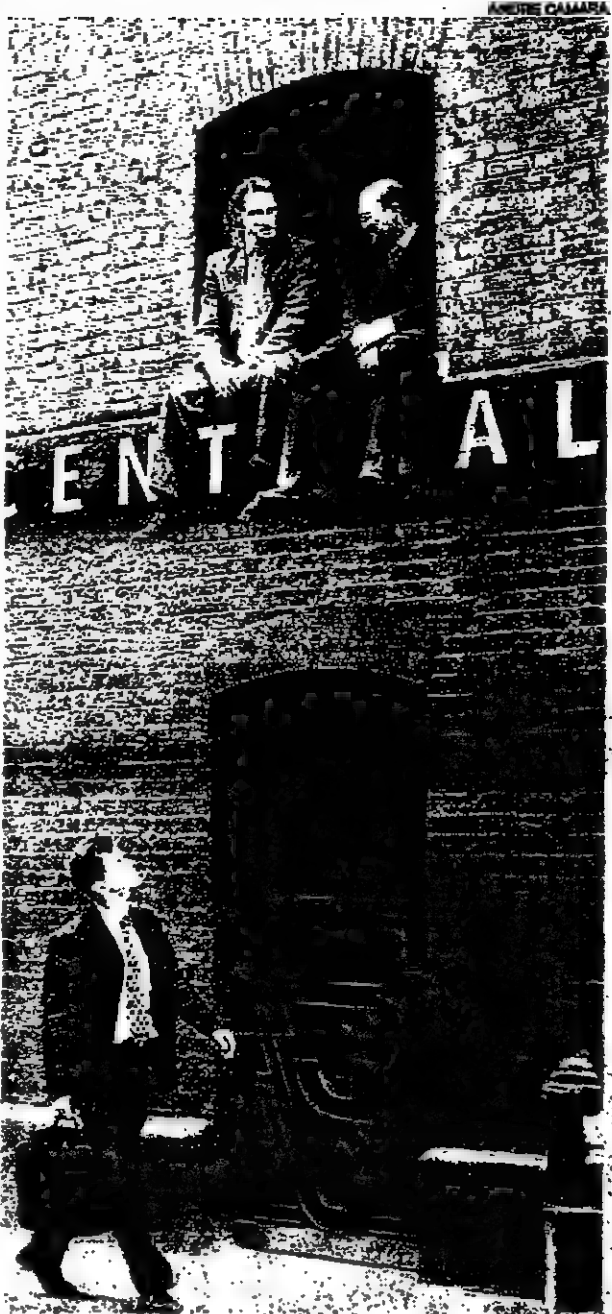
"The most precious commodity in the Treasury at the moment is time with Ed and Ed spends a lot of time with the Chancellor. There are a lot of people who need him to communicate with them."

Diane Abbott, the Labour MP who recently lost her seat on the Treasury Select Committee, questioned the degree of power enjoyed by the special advisers. "Some of these advisers are suffering from hubris," she said.

Ms Abbott was responding to disquiet about the financial market fall-out from last Friday's report in the *Financial Times* on EMU policy, widely thought to have been inspired by briefings from the Chancellor's team. She said: "With a new government, you have new ministers and also new advisers who haven't learned that careful talk costs lives."

The film tracks the dramatic events of the first weeks of Mr Brown's tenure, including the decision to give the Bank control over interest rates and to strip it of its supervisory powers. The latter clearly threw up differences of opinion between the Chancellor's team and Treasury officials.

Sir Terry said that he was nervous about the supervisory decision coming so quickly after the independence announcement and said that he understood the angry reaction of Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England. "It was a very big thing for him and he did not have very much time to think through the implications before the announcement was made. I was not surprised at his reaction," Sir Terry said. *We Are the Treasury*, ITV, 10.40pm on October 7.



Higher returns: Andrew Wilson, chief executive of Rugby Estate, sitting left, and Stephen Jones, finance director, raised net assets by 11 per cent to 170p a share. Pre-tax profits rose to £1.1 million from £0.8 million. The share price rose 6p to 403p. The half-year dividend rises 5 pence to 0.24p and the shares rose 1p to 162p.

Hyder cuts 350 jobs as operations are united

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDER is to axe 350 jobs, taking the total lost in the Welsh multi-utility company to 1,250 since its formation through the merger of Welsh Water and Swalec nearly two years ago.

Hyder expects to make savings of £15 million a year over the next three years by combining day-to-day operations in water, gas and electricity.

Managerial jobs may go, as well as administrative posts, as Hyder puts its utility operations under a single management team. John Roberts, chief executive of Swalec, will head the utility operation, supported by Mike Brookes, chief executive of Welsh Water.

Hyder said that the streamlining would improve the competitive position of its utility businesses in both regulated and newly liberalised markets. Graham Hawker, group chief executive, said: "These changes represent a natural and logical next step in implementing our strategy. We have made excellent progress in recent years."

Hyder shares rose by 30p to 949p, their highest since the company's formation.

An immediate casualty of the shake-up is Stuart Doughty, chief executive of the engineering consultancy business, who left yesterday with no job to go. The position held by the 52-year-old director will not exist in the new structure. Hyder said that the business would be sold or merged with another company. Mr Doughty was on a one-year, £160,000 contract.

C&W launches first long-distance price cap

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE first price cap on long-distance phone calls was launched yesterday by Cable & Wireless with an offer for customers to spend as long as they want on the phone and pay only 50p.

C&W is offering the rate for long-distance calls on Saturdays until the end of the year. The cap follows a similar marketing move by New Zealand Telecom, which lifted the number of calls by 60 per cent.

Adrian Chamberlain, managing director of the consumer division at C&W Communications, said: "We have introduced the 50p price cap so that customers can enjoy using the phone and not worry about how long the call is. Saturday seemed an ideal day to choose as people have more time to relax."

C&W said it provided a 30-minute call for 50p, compared with 98p for BT.

Boeing's jet shake-up

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BOEING is likely to abandon further development of the MD80/90 narrow-bodied jets made by McDonnell Douglas, the US aircraft group it merged with earlier this year (Adam Jones writes).

Boeing is likely to announce the fate of McDonnell Douglas's full range of commercial jets around November 1. The

Boeing's jet shake-up

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

single-aisle MD80/90s compete with the Boeing 737 and Airbus 320.

Bruce Deitnis, a Boeing vice-president, said they were not competitive. He said: "Further development seems unlikely." This does not necessarily mean that existing models will no longer be produced.

Boeing's jet shake-up

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Barclays faces new dispute over pay

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BARCLAYS BANK will meet union leaders today to discuss a dispute over a new performance-related pay structure. Earlier this week Unifi and Bifu, the unions, received a narrow mandate for strike action after a ballot of the 40,000 Barclays staff they represent. Barclays said the bank was not prepared to reopen negotiations on the fundamental principles behind the new structure.

Walkouts would probably affect Barclays' branches, possibly in the form of two-day or three-day actions. Two months ago the unions held a three-week overtime ban to protest against a new performance-related pay scheme, which they say could impose a pay freeze on 25,000 staff.

Ford pay offer rejected

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

UNION LEADERS representing 20,000 Ford car workers have rejected an "insulting" pay offer worth 5.5 per cent over the next two years. During talks in London, Ford offered a rise of 2.75 per cent over the next year and another increase of 2.75 per cent the following year. The company also offered minor improvements on pensions. Tony Woodley, of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said: "The offer has been firmly rejected." Further talks will be held next month.

Martin back in black

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

MARTIN INTERNATIONAL, a supplier of clothing to Marks & Spencer and others, has returned to the black at the halfway stage with a pre-tax profit of £395,000 compared with a £453,000 loss this time last year. Earnings were 0.5p (1.8p loss) per share and will be paid out in an interim dividend of 0.5p (0.45p) on January 2. Michael Kidd, chairman, said there had been a substantial growth in sales to principal customers and that orders for next year were at a high level.

BTR wins \$70m contract

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

SHARES in BTR fell 7p to 243p yesterday even though BTR said that it had been awarded the contract for both the complete platform-sealing system and the engine-mount system for a new General Motors model to be launched in the next century, in a deal worth \$70 million (£43 million). BTR said the contract involved more than one million vehicles a year, which will be manufactured by GM in different locations worldwide.

Polypipe spending £20m

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

POLYPIPE, the building materials group, said that it expects capital expenditure amounting to £20 million in the current year. Kevin McDonald told shareholders at the annual meeting: "The first quarter has started well and we continue to remain confident of another successful year ahead." He added: "The group's balance sheet remains strong with net cash to enable us to respond quickly to an increase in volume demand." The shares remained unchanged at 215.5p.

Streamline lands deals

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

STREAMLINE HOLDINGS has been awarded two contracts worth just under £1 million to manufacture and supply 62 variable motorway message signs for use on the M40 and A1(M). The first contract is to supply 22 variable road signs for the M40 between junctions 1 and 3 where Tarnack and John Laing are widening the motorway. The second is for 40 variable message signs for the A1(M) between Alconbury and Peterborough. The shares were unchanged at 178.5p.

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An advance on the tax front



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The intricacies of advance corporation tax and foreign income dividends can bring on a migraine for the most chued up finance director so it is not entirely surprising if a novice Government finds itself a touch befuddled by such fiscal niceties.

But the reforming regime that came to power in May did not allow an apparent lack of clarity on the subject to prevent it from advocating change. In his first Budget, the Chancellor announced that he intended to abolish the foreign income dividend scheme.

He cannot have imagined the indignant response that would ensue. Major companies such as Rio Tinto and SmithKline Beecham announced that they would have no choice but to pack their bags and leave their UK bases, taking their London stock exchange listings with them.

Their protests were not wasted. The new Government has been at pains to emphasise its business friendly credentials and has been rewarded with a reception unpredictably enthusiastic for a Labour administration. It would hardly wish to jeopardise that happy situation by precipitating an exodus of big corporate names.

So what had been announced as firm policy was rapidly watered down into a period of consultation. Now, rather more enlightened on the subject of FIDS and ACT, it seems that the Government may have come to

the indisputably sensible idea of sweeping away the lot.

This is the sort of modernising of which we should all approve, even Ken Livingstone. The British corporate tax system has been geared to producing ample employment for accountants rather than merely filling the public coffers in the most straightforward manner. Abolishing advance corporation tax effectively rules out the need for special treatment for foreign income dividends and would therefore be enough to appease those companies which earn much of their income overseas who were so upset by the Budget bombshell.

The City has convinced itself that rumours of the move are true and that the proposals will be made in Gordon Brown's green Budget next month. The joy of a green Budget is that, unlike his last effort, there will be ample time for consultation before initiatives are in danger of hurtling towards the statute books.

A streamlining of corporation tax would meet with wide approval, and the cost of abolishing ACT could be largely recompensed by demanding quarterly payment of corporation tax. This could place an extra administrative burden on firms, particularly if it were to be

accompanied by a requirement for quarterly reporting of results, as is the norm in the United States.

There would, as ever, be some companies that stand to gain more than others from the changes. Smaller firms would tend to dominate the losers. And, in a delicious twist to the tale, the privatised water companies would be able to count themselves winners, a suitable quid pro quo for the windfall tax.

Hanging on for the regulators

The competition authorities have only to take a look at the \$30 billion price tag being attached to WorldCom's bid for MCI to know that this is one with which the regulators can have a field day. Never mind that they may eventually decide that there is sufficient competition in the telecoms market

for them to allow the deal to proceed, in the meantime they have the power to put the whole idea on hold for anything up to a year.

This is the prospect which must be causing some agony for BT's board. For there is nothing more difficult for a business to contend with than uncertainty. The official line from BT is that it is weighing up its options, but those options now depend very heavily on the US regulators. And while the regulators ponder, much could happen, including a heavy deterioration in the value of WorldCom's offer.

To say that WorldCom stock is highly rated is to fail to do justice to the fervour which Bernard Ebbers has succeeded in generating around his shares. He has excited Wall Street into valuing his shares at 40 times earnings, the sort of level that might be accorded to a bio-tech stock which could strike a fortune-making discovery — or could

vanish into the netherworld inhabited by a raft of such companies which were built on hope.

WorldCom has progressed beyond hope to acquire a profits stream, but only just. Adding MCI to its voracious list of takeovers would make sense, bringing synergy and cost savings not available to BT. But, with the prospect of being beaten by WorldCom in the equation, BT's share price has already strengthened, adding to the value of its offer. It is not impossible that, as the regulators plough through their inquiries the two offers could come more in line.

That would give BT more leverage should it want to retain an involvement in Concert, its existing link with MCI. What is not yet clear is what would be BT's preferred solution to the tangle that has emerged in the US. The instant reaction of the City was that it should take the speediest route out of the entanglement but,

given the enthusiasm Sir Peter Bonfield had for the link, this may not be his choice.

If he were still keen on joining forces with MCI, he could do worse than indulge in a little spin-doctoring against the sky high WorldCom price. Throw in fears over the regulatory hurdles ahead, and the game may not be over.

Blood still flowing at United Utilities

Talk of yet more heads rolling in United Utilities is a worrying sign that Sir Desmond Pitcher still wields the cash, in spite of a sword hanging over his own head.

The hasty exit of John Telfow, the company secretary, has been attributed to health grounds. But insiders, surprised at the quick departure, believe that Sir Desmond has exerted his influence again. Mr Telfow, it is thought, worked too closely with Brian Staples, the axed chief executive, for his own survival.

Blood-spilling is endemic at United Utilities. It was the sacking of Mr Staples that quickened the institutional calls for an end to Sir Desmond. Investors, un-

easy at the autocratic style of a man who had already seen off one chief executive, demanded that Sir Desmond gave up the reins of executive chairman earlier than his planned retirement date of 2000.

United Utilities staff may hope that the date is brought forward early enough to guard against further axe wielding.

All is expected to be revealed in the next few weeks after the completion of a review into the business and the search by headhunters for a new chairman. Advisers say that a shortlist is emerging.

No doubt the recruitment consultants will have placed diplomacy and delegation high on their list of requirements. For whoever succeeds Sir Desmond, when he chooses to go, will need to do much repairing of morale at the multi-utility in the North West.

Bank notes

INVESTMENT banking needs big pockets and brave hearts. Martin Taylor's decision that Barclays could not play the game alone only serves to highlight the difficulties facing another British high street bank that thought it could join the big league. Pressure on NatWest can only increase as a result of today's news. Selling off bits and pieces will not be enough to assuage the critics who believe that NatWest should leave investment banking well alone.

United lifts mis-selling cover by £79m

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

UNITED ASSURANCE has more than doubled provisions for clearing its pensions mis-selling backlog to £150 million in a desperate attempt to meet the deadlines set by the Personal Investment Authority.

With just four weeks to go before its deadline for completing priority cases, George Mack, group chief executive, said only half of the 3,300 people involved had been offered compensation. He said United had "a mountain to climb" to meet the PIA target but would be working hard to do so.

United risks a large fine from the PIA if it misses the deadline. This week the regulator imposed a £450,000 penalty on Friends Provident for failing to meet a similar deadline in March. Any delay will also threaten a second PIA deadline at the end of April.

Mr Mack blamed United's lack of progress on the difficulty of getting information from clients as well as state and occupational pension funds. He said the £79 million increase in provisions, which includes an

exceptional charge of £68.4 million to shareholders, would be used to fund guaranteed schemes and make unconditional offers of reinstatement.

Guaranteed-type schemes have been offered by a number of insurers as a short cut to completing the pensions review. With these schemes companies promise policyholders will not suffer financially even if they are not reinstated in a company or state pension.

United also said it was setting up a new management services company to pass on an estimated £37 million in annual cost savings from the £146 billion merger between United Friendly and Refuge last year. It also revealed the sale of its loss-making Financial Planning arm to Friends Provident. Pre-tax profits on continuing activities, before exceptional, in the first half of the year leapt to £158 million (£86 million). There is an interim dividend of 7p, up 30 per cent, and a final payment for the year of 14p (12.5p) is forecast.

Scottish Telecoms 'float' talk

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

SPECULATION that ScottishPower could float off its telecoms division, Scottish Telecom, was reignited yesterday when the company briefed City analysts on prospects for the business.

ScottishPower compared its telecoms arm with a range of similar businesses, including Energis, the National Grid's operation, which is to be floated. It is thought that Scottish Telecom could be worth £700 million as an independent entity.

The operation, which broke even in the last financial year, will make £4 million profit this year, according to Rod Matthews, its chief executive. This is based on sales of £110 million, which have more than doubled from £54 million the previous year. Mr Matthews told analysts that Scottish Telecom, launched three years ago, was aiming for 10 per cent of Scotland's £2 billion telecoms market by 2000, double its current share.

T&N silent on £1.23bn Federal bid

By GEORGE SIVELY

A BOARD meeting at T&N, the car components group, broke up yesterday with no word on how the directors viewed the £1.23 billion bid from Federal-Mogul of Michigan launched last Friday.

No announcement is imminent. Sir Colin Hope, T&N chairman, and the board are talking to Federal-Mogul, whose bid team remains in London, and other companies who expressed an interest in T&N during the summer.

Analysts believe that Federal-Mogul is in pole position, however, because of the detailed talks already held with T&N during July. But it would appear that the four big shareholders that control more than 50 per cent of T&N are holding out for much higher terms than Federal-Mogul's 235p a share indicated offer.

Yesterday T&N shares rose 3p to 249p against the 270p or so at which the big four would appear to begin to think about accepting.

English & Overseas puts £5.6m into Oriel

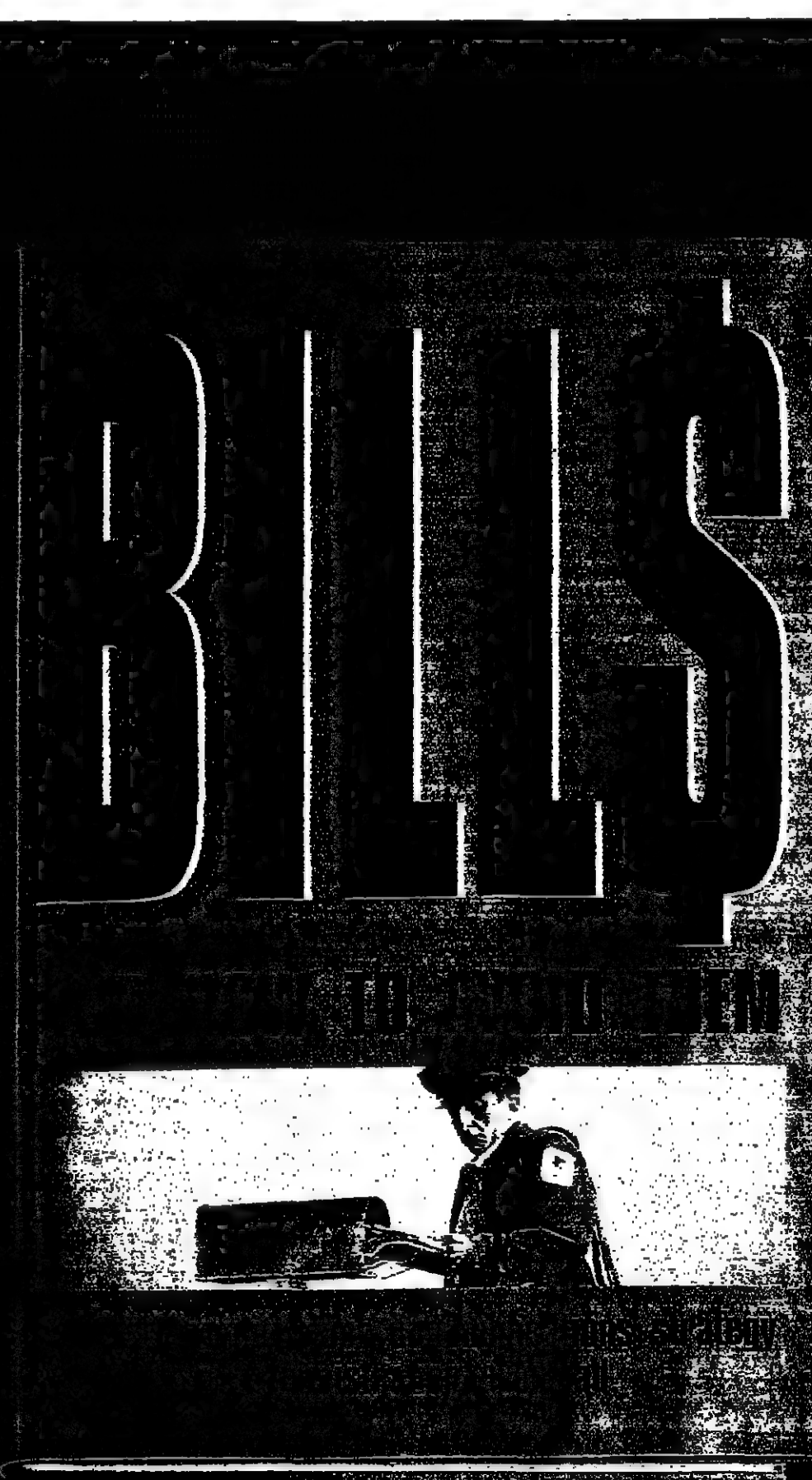
ENGLISH & Overseas Properties (E&OP), the property investment minnow, is branching out into hotels by investing £5.6 million in Oriel Leisure, an independent hotel management company (Dominic Walsh writes).

Oriel, founded in 1991 to run distressed hotel assets for banks and receivers, will use the money to start development of a chain of budget Holiday Inn Express hotels under a franchise deal with Bass. E&OP's investment will take the form of a mix of ordinary and convertible preference

shares that will give control to E&OP on conversion. Jim Clark, E&OP's chief executive, said that its "ideal scenario" would be a flotation of Oriel in four to five years' time.

On top of the £5.6 million, Tito Tetartamanti, chairman of E&OP and a former Holiday Inn franchisee, has personally committed £4.5 million. With bank borrowings, Oriel expects to be able to assemble a war chest of £25 million.

Oriel has contracted to develop between 15 and 20 hotels, mostly alongside pubs, at about £3.5 million each.



Tim Flinders had his eye on the big picture. By moving all his organisation's phones over to Orange he'd get 50 phones on a single Talk Plan and one bill instead of 50. He'd capitalise on the big monthly savings that pooling 5000 inclusive minutes would achieve. And with Orange international calls from the UK costing 20% less than BT's standard rates, the cash would be rolling in. Nobody need ever know that he sorted it all out in his lunch hour by calling Orange.

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Ignore scare stories about Britain joining EMU early

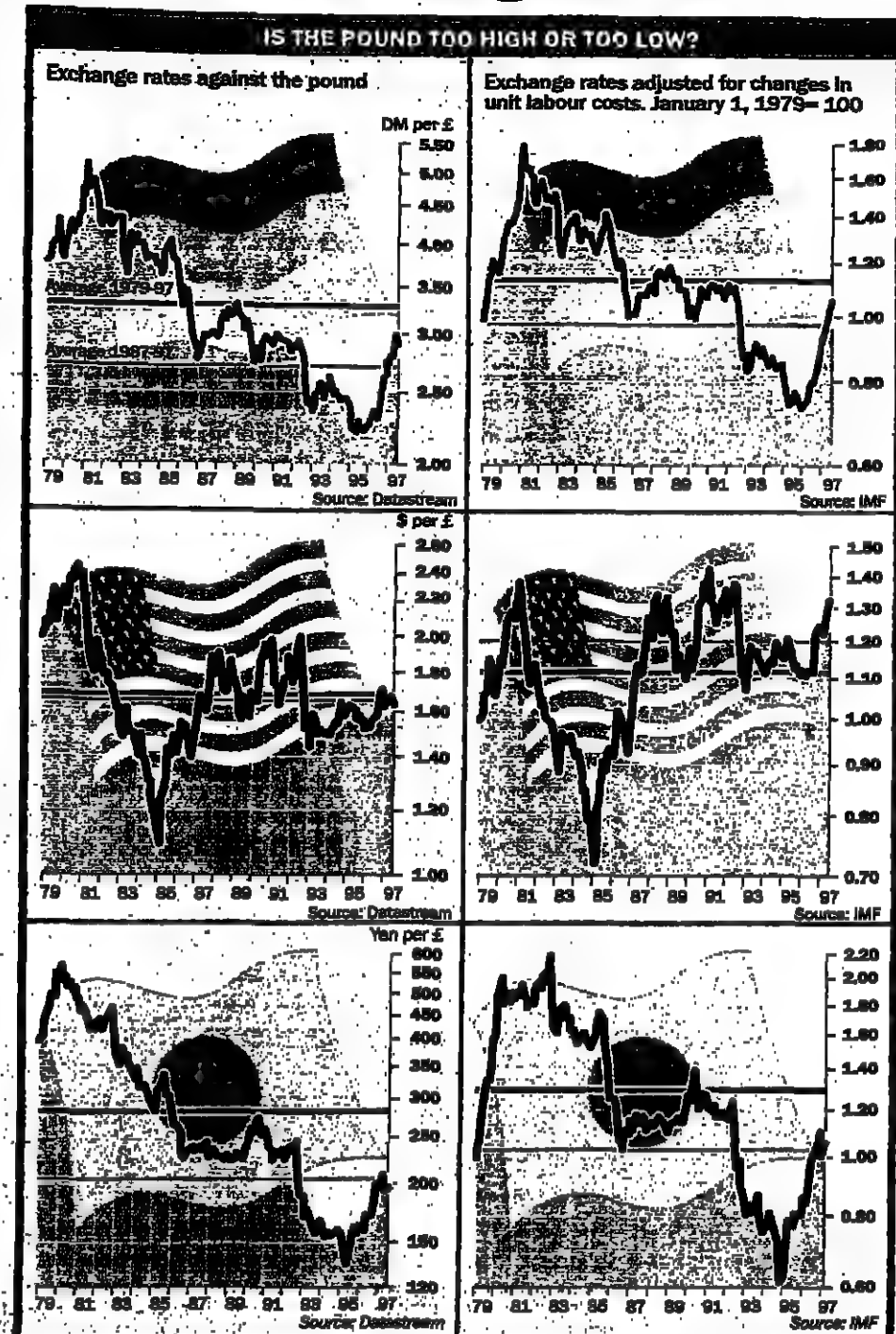
Blair will want to win the next election before risking a single currency referendum

The pound is now back to exactly where it was last Thursday, before the dramatic prediction in the *Financial Times* that Tony Blair was about to announce a referendum on Britain joining the European monetary union. This is understandable, since the story raised more questions than it answered. Here, then, are some answers to the ten questions that seem most important to me.

1) Assuming EMU goes ahead in 1999, will Britain join? Not in 1999, but probably after 2002 if the single currency survives that long. But this is hardly news. Even the Tory Eurosceptics never demanded a permanent guarantee against EMU membership. "Never say never" is a slogan that almost all politicians understand and accept.

2) What, then, has changed as a result of last week's story? The Government, according to the story, is moving towards a decision to join EMU well before 2002. In order to do this Tony Blair would have to call a referendum before the next general election. According to some political commentators close to Gordon Brown, Labour sees attractions in calling a referendum as early as possible, to capitalise on its present popularity with the voters and to give the Prime Minister a free hand to join EMU whenever he sees fit.

3) Is the story about early EMU membership and a referendum credible? No. There are numerous economic arguments against joining early — for example, the wide divergence between the British and German business cycles — but the clinching objection is political. For Tony Blair the risks of a referendum seem much too high. Nobody can guarantee that Mr Blair's record personal popularity would be translated into support for the Government on EMU. The obstacle is not so much that public opinion at present runs against the euro. Voters' opinion on EMU are generally believed to be soft and open to persuasion: by both sides in this argument. The Euro-enthusiasts believe this justifies the risk of a referendum, but the softness of public opinion on Europe can cut both ways. In 1992, President Mitterrand was confident of overwhelming support for his snap referendum on the Maastricht treaty: in fact the "petit oui" ended up as a majority of 50.3 to 49.7. But even if Mr Blair thought he had a 70 per cent chance of winning, he would not want to risk a referendum, since the consequence of defeat would



be catastrophic, while the rewards of victory would be small, or even negative (see question 5). 4) Why is a referendum so risky? Mr Blair's authority would be shattered if he gratuitously called and then lost a referendum on an issue that the Opposition and the media would turn (quite rightly) into a vote of confidence on the Prime Minister's constitutional and economic judgment. Mr Blair would become a lame duck as surely as President Chirac has in France. 5) But wouldn't an early referendum split the Tories, leaving Mr Blair with nothing to fear, whether he won or lost? On the contrary. A referendum on early membership of EMU is the event most likely to unite all wings of the Conservative Party. Kenneth Clarke would probably have no hesitation in campaigning about a decision to join EMU on any specific date such as January 2000. He would argue that, while he supported the single currency in principle, the Government had missed the chance of becoming

a founder member and had not done enough to bring the British and German economies into line. And if Mr Blair called a referendum demanding an open mandate to join EMU at a time of his own choosing? The Tories would find it even easier to unite in attacking him for demanding a blank cheque. To defeat the Government in a referendum would transform the Tories' morale and their standing in the country. It might even give Mr Clarke a chance to re-enter Tory politics without betraying his pro-European views. Mr Blair must also consider the risks of victory. By leading Britain into early membership of EMU, Mr Blair would put himself in the same position as John Major in 1990, bearing personal responsibility for all the consequences of all economic decisions made in Frankfurt, over which he would have little influence and no control. 6) What, then, is the alternative to an early referendum if the Government eventually wants to join EMU? Instead of calling a referendum, Mr Blair could make membership of EMU after

2002 a plank of his manifesto in the next general election. The Tories would not be able to unite in opposition to such a manifesto commitment, since many in principle believe that such decisions should be taken in elections, rather than referendums. Alternatively, Mr Blair could call a referendum immediately after the next general election. If he won the election, he would be likely to win the referendum. Anyway, he would be then on course to achieve his over-riding political ambition — to be the first Labour Prime Minister to serve two full terms. 7) What are the arguments against a referendum collapse in 1999, once the British people see EMU up and running? Not at all. Although EMU will formally commence on January 1, 1999, nothing visible will actually happen. It will certainly be impossible to claim that EMU had succeeded (or failed) until several years after the starting date. Europe will certainly not erect trade barriers against British exporters and banks will not leave the City of London in the early stages of EMU — especially if

it is generally believed that Britain will join after another general election around 2002. If anything, the first few years of EMU are actually likely to see a greater concentration of activity in London's financial markets, as small financial centres such as Milan, Madrid and Amsterdam close down.

8) All these are tactical arguments about timing, so why should anyone care? Surely it makes no difference whether Britain joins in 2002, 2000 or 1999?

In the very long run this may be true. But timing is crucial for three reasons. First, it is possible (though unlikely) that the next election could produce a government with a fundamentally different British policy towards EMU. Secondly, and more plausibly, EMU might "fail" or at least cause serious economic and political tensions in its early years. Britain's gains from remaining outside the potential financial and political turbulence would almost certainly outweigh its loss of influence over decisions on the implementation of EMU, nearly all of which have already been made or will be made in the months immediately before January 1999.

Finally, the question of timing will have a major influence on financial and economic conditions in Britain today. If Britain decided to join EMU, it would have to join the European exchange-rate mechanism (ERM) and announce a target exchange rate — the figure most often mentioned is DM2.65 to the pound. The economic impact of such an announcement would depend entirely on the length of the run-up to EMU, as discussed in the next question. 9) Wouldn't British industry gain from a more competitive exchange rate if Britain announced it would join EMU at a rate of DM2.65 to the pound?

The first point to note is that no country has ever joined the ERM (never mind a permanent monetary union) at an exchange rate so far from its current market level (which is DM2.86). Even supposing that this breach of etiquette (also known as "competitive devaluation") were permitted, it is not clear whether the pound would go down or up. If Mr Blair said he planned to join EMU at DM2.65 in 2000, the present difference between British and German interest rates might mean the pound falling slightly from its present level (to about DM2.82). But if Britain joined EMU at DM2.65 in 2002, the pound could actually rise above DM3, since the present differential between German and British interest rates would compensate investors for a devaluation of more than 10 per cent over five years.

10) What then should I do as an investor? My advice would be to ignore stories about EMU and judge sterling, gilts and equities on their fundamental values. And what do these fundamentals suggest? I only promised to answer ten questions.

Waterstone vision of a books market for middle-brow readers

When WH Smith announced the company had rejected a surprise bid by Tim Waterstone, observers assumed he was after control of Waterstone's, the bookshop chain that he founded and then sold to WH Smith. There was some amazement when it turned out that the bid was for the whole group. "I can't bear to watch the decline of Smith's retail," he said yesterday. "It had no like-for-like growth last year. It is an extraordinary story of decline."

His idea for the WH Smith high street shops, which he has been mulling over since the beginning of this year, is to bring in a lot of the ideas behind the Waterstone's bookshops and behind his new venture, the Daisy and Tom children's shop in the King's Road.

Mr Waterstone wants to fill at least 50 per cent of the space with books, with about four times as many books in stock as are currently held by the business. But, unlike Waterstone's, the books on the shelves would be mainly middle-brow. "I'd have every title ever written by Catherine Cookson and every one ever written by Joanna Trollope," he said. "I'd have minor authors and lots of books on gardening, reference books, children's books, lots of things that Waterstone's doesn't really do," he said.

The model for the look would be Daisy and Tom's children's book department. "It would be a lot softer and more elegant than WH Smith is now," he said. "It is a subtle thing."

Video and music would go from the shops, but stationery, which he likes for its high margins, would be built up. "I'd do it incomparably better. The range is not great enough now. I'd make it an Aladdin's cave," he said.

The other area he wants to build up is news and magazines. "Instead of contracting the ranges, I'd do the reverse. I'd stock every foreign and minority newspaper," he

The WHS bid has the feel of a personal crusade, says Sarah Cunningham

said. Stealing another idea from Waterstone's, which he always insisted should only employ graduates, the staff of WH Smith would also be much more highly trained and motivated.

He speaks with infectious enthusiasm and clearly has a strong vision for how the underperforming shops could be changed. To most analysts, the ideas sound appealing but appallingly expensive. This is something he refuses: "Everyone says that Waterstone's didn't make money at the beginning, but it always made money at branch level," he counters. "We just ploughed all the money back into opening new branches."

The whole basis of Mr Waterstone's plan is that he would get same-store sales growth at WH Smith up to about 5 per cent. The Waterstone's chain has much better growth than that, and he feels it does not need changes made to the way it is run.



WH Smith: growth needed

"Alan Giles (who runs it for WH Smith) is wonderful. All it needs is a great wedge of capex (capital expenditure) to build up the size of the shops."

One part of the proposal that has caused some scepticism among WH Smith shareholders is his insistence that Daisy and Tom be brought into the main group. He says that the sum of £35 million WH Smith has put on this is unfair, but he firmly believes in the business and insists it would be a core part of the group. He is also keen to keep Smith's news distribution business, but he does not like its book distribution side and is keen to unload its large music business. It would probably be easy to sell Virgin Our Price to Virgin, but the American music businesses could prove more difficult to sell.

Smith's main shareholders were curious yesterday to hear about Mr Waterstone's plans for the group, but highly sceptical about the finances. There is some suspicion that Tim Waterstone is either planning to come back with an improved offer or is just trying to get his hands back on his bookshops. "The deal as it looks now just doesn't quite stack up," David Manning, of Foreign and Colonial, said. Another shareholder said that Mr Waterstone has proved himself to be "clearly very successful in a very focused environment", but was less sure how he would cope with looking after a whole group. John Richards, retail analyst at NatWest Markets, believes that whatever Mr Waterstone's record and vision may be, shareholders "want money rather than bits of paper".

"Tim Waterstone," he said, "has a lot of creative retail ideas, but is not very conscious of the bottom line". It is not the best reference for the job of chief executive of WH Smith, although no one doubts that for too long creative retail ideas have been in sadly short supply.

BUSINESS LETTER

Shareholders should vote on executive remuneration

From the Managing Director of Meis Ltd

Sir, It is a matter of concern to me as an adviser on executive remuneration that Hampel's proposals will reduce transparency and help hide the topic of executive remuneration from shareholders. This retrograde proposal will allow the few companies who are so inclined to abuse the system. I disagree with Hampel and have for some time felt a vote on executive remuneration was both practical and highly desirable. If such voting was introduced,

shareholders would always give their support to well designed and effectively communicated executive remuneration policies.

It is only those poorly designed and communicated policies that would encounter shareholder hostility, and rightly so. At the moment, shareholder concern can only be expressed either through the back door or through voting against the re-election of a director. This might be regarded as slightly extreme. Attending shareholders should be allowed to vote in favour of the directors, but at

the same time express views that the package is, say, too rich.

Therefore, the suggestion by the NAPF that the remuneration committee's report should be a voting matter at AGMs should receive the wholehearted support from both remuneration committees and shareholders.

Yours faithfully, DAVID M W BROOKS, Managing Director, Meis Limited, Management Consulting, 1 Castle Yard, Richmond upon Thames.

Fee fi fo fum

WARNINGS that last year would be the high-water mark for City fees and it would be bread and dripping under new Labour were ill-founded, because this year looks like setting another record: Philip Healey, editor of *Acquisitions Monthly*, expects fees to hit £1.2 billion. The number of deals in the first nine months is up, but their actual value was £7.4 billion lower at £35.2 billion. Yet the fees keep rising. This suggests the City is charging more for less work, and getting away with

it, does it not? Healey says it is all too reminiscent of the boom of the late 1980s. "It's becoming quite crazy. But if you are involved in it, it seems quite normal." In terms of value of deals done, at present the Americans are ahead. Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley at first and third place, bracketing Schroders.

CHARMING but empty, the Lake District. Which must explain the competition that runs in the *Westmorland Gazette*, heading for the stock market as part of *Newsquest*. Rather than a *Spot the Ball* feature, the paper prints a picture of a field of sheep. "Look carefully at the position of the sheep and then use your skill and judgment to place a cross at the exact point where you think the dog's nose was." The competition is called *Spot the Dog*. *Spot, Spot, loveable Spot, he's soft and cuddly and he smiles a lot...*

Odd couple

STRANGE, the sudden emergence of Ian Martin into the WH Smith arena as "Tim Waterstone's partner". He is a



hard-headed Scottish financier. Waterstone is the man who left the entire takings from the first day's trade of his first bookshop, £924 in all, on the Circle Line. An unlikely couple, but good friends, it seems.

Martin previously ran a British fund for KKR but could never persuade the Americans to part with cash to back his projects, in particular a break-up bid for GrandMet. I hear. He had quit the latter with £556,000 after losing out in the battle for the top job. Martin is chairman of Unigate but has always wanted to get to that top job at GrandMet. You and I, on walking out on our employer with half a million quid in the bank, might not be in a hurry

to walk back. But the rich are indeed different.

GREAT excitement in adland over news that Maurice Saatchi, himself the owner of a Bentley, would be peddling Rolls-Royces, a product that I always assumed sold itself — I mean, you hardly stand outside the showroom agonising over a Roller or a Ford Orion, do you? The story was shifted down a couple of gears by an embarrassed-sounding Vickers, which owns the luxury car brand. Yes, there has been contact with M&C Saatchi over raising the value of used Rollers in the US. Nothing so vulgar as an ad campaign. And don't, please, say used. The phrase is "previously owned".

Paris match

TERENCE CONRAN is opening a new restaurant in Paris. (I mean Sir Terence, of course, except that Terry, as we metropolitan sophisticates call him, now omits any mention of his title in conversation or correspondence). He has found a site, and it will open at the end of next year. A long time to build a brasserie, surely? "Let me tell you how a restaurant works," says Conran, and I recall, suddenly, that he is known to have a bit of a

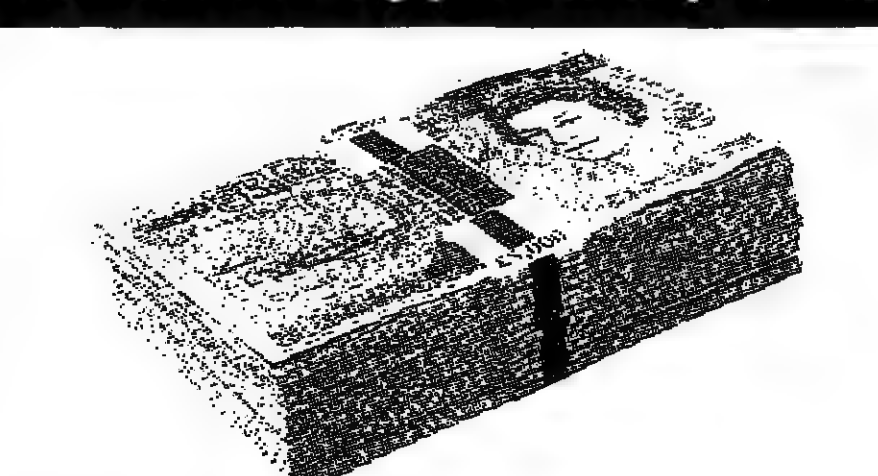
short fuse. "You find the space, in the location that you are interested in. You have to go through all the planning permission, fire safety and so on. Gradually you start to make decisions about the kind of food you are going to serve and the price level." So the venue has as yet no name, no chef and no menu. Conran believes French restaurants are in the doldrums. If so, he has an opportunity to put this right next spring. He has been invited across to Paris to lecture on the subject. The invitation came from Paul Bocuse, the grandest frangin in French cheldom.

MARTIN WALLER



Terence Conran is taking on the French at his own gastronomic game

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TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

[illegible]

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£4,000 to be won

Check the numbers on your Portfolio card and find yours.

Check the numbers on your Portfolio card and find your eight stocks in the Portfolio panel below. In the column provided next to your eight shares enter the share movements, as published on this page. Ignore fractions, ie enter 16½ as 16 (the symbol $\frac{1}{2}$ means no change). After listing the price changes of your eight shares, add or subtract as appropriate to find your total, which can be plus or minus. If your overall total matches exactly the points required for the daily dividend you win or share the £4,000 daily prize.

No.	Company	Business	Commenced 1995
1	Debernitz T	Food	
2	Devero	Room Man	
3	LSH	Property	
4	Unibest & Rich	Property	
5	Kwik-Sak	Rest Gen	
6	Kwik-Sak	Classical	
7	Rubelrod	Blid Mass	
8	Baldwin	Leisure	
9	Atlantic	Insurance	
10	Gwinger	Property	
11	LuxuryVariety	Eng. Veh	
12	T & N	Eng. Veh	
13	Hinson	Blid Mass	
14	Elco	Electronics	
15	Regent Inns	Breweries	
16	SBC Group	Oil Fin	
17	Falco Group	Electronic	
18	Vaduate	Telecomms	
19	Brandon Hire	Blid & Cons	
20	Teleview	Telecomms	
21	Reardon PLC	Blid Mass	
22	Laporte	Chemicals	
23	PKT	Engineering	
24	VTA	Metals	
25	Ambley	Electronic	
26	UniChem	Healthcare	
27	Viglen Tech.	Electronic	
28	Elliot (P)	Engineering	
29	Larandson	Srv Serv	
30	BWD	Oil Fin	
31	Perpetual	Oil Fin	
32	Smurth (Jef)	Print Pap	
33	Grosvener	Breweries	
34	Wicks	Blid Gen	
35	Nitha Ireland	Electry	
36	NPC	Transport	
37	Winnand	Food and	
38	Cult Telecom	Telecomms	
39	Thorn	Res Gen	
40	CMC	Srv Serv	
41	Vaux Group	Breweries	
42	SFL	Breweries	
43	Max ED & F	Shinglin	
44	Cobham	Oil Fin	

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DAILY DIVIDEND

DAILY DIVIDEND
+40

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claimants should ring
0171-481 3388
between 9.30am-3pm**

Weekly Dividend

Please make a note of your daily totals to match the weekly dividend published in the *Sunday Times* to win £10,000

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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There were no winners of the £2,000 prize yesterday. Today's prize is now worth £4,000.

[illegible]

TRANSPORT

174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627
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WATER

577	Anglin	834	+	7	5.7	15
263	East Surrey	259			5.0	3
740		50	+	30	5.0	3
101	Highway Co. Pri	114			5.2	4
532	Mid Kent Hosp	510			5.2	4
693	South Trans	525		2	5.2	4
275	South Staff	512			5.2	4
595	South West	301		30	5.1	3
607	Thames	339	+	12	4.8	10
344	The William	790	+	13	4.8	10
344	Worcester	300	+	1	6.4	
205						

...

Company Name	Price	Yield	Dividend
44 American Bond	125	11	
178 Cash Bond	106	1.9	
253 Family Bond	202	8.8	
191 Growth Hope	22	27	
21 Insurance	35		
27 Insurance Corp	35		
281 Public Ind	105		
442 Service Corp	105		
619 Southern Bond	101		
61 Southern Stock	101		
124 Southern	101		

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Unilever to sell coffee business

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch food and consumer products group, has put its Australian and New Zealand coffee business, worth A\$90 million (£41 million), up for sale.

The divisions are being sold as a single unit to concentrate on ice cream and tea operations. The divisions, which are profitable, came as part of the Bushells acquisition made nearly ten years ago, and they employ 231 people in Australia and 43 in New Zealand.

The brands being sold include Robert Timms, Pablo and Faggs and will be sold as a going concern.

B&R wins

Shell Expro, a joint venture between Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon, has awarded a £20 million contract to Brown and Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton, the US energy and engineering group, to serve Shell's offshore installations. The five-year contract covers the management and operations at the Alens operation and Torry Marine bases in Aberdeen.

Buying back

Care First, the healthcare group, is to buy back up to 8.44 million shares, or 5 per cent. They may be purchased at a maximum price of not more than 5 per cent above the average middle market quotation for the five business days before the deal is done.

R-R contract

Reyrolle Projects, Rolls-Royce's Malaysian joint venture, has won a £15 million contract to build two new substations and extend two others in the Malaysian state of Sabah.

Tool deal

Vibroplant has bought Domindo Tool Hire from Rentold Initial for £1.3 million cash.

Large firms 'worst for delaying payments'

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

FEWER than two out of ten UK companies pay their bills on time and large businesses are the worst offenders for slow payment.

Figures from a Dun & Bradstreet survey of more than 85,000 companies showing that 81.7 per cent of businesses runs up overdue accounts, come as the Government closes its Green Paper consultations on late payment today. Fewer than 10 per cent of large companies pay bills within pre-arranged terms, and among large manufacturers, only 6.6 per cent make prompt payment, according to the study.

Philip Mellor, senior analyst at Dun & Bradstreet, said: "With only two out of ten businesses paying their bills on time, we feel that these figures fully support our case for legislation in favour of a statutory right to interest on late payment. It is clear that voluntary measures which have been introduced over the past ten years have had no effect on changing the business culture."

The Government has set out plans to "end the culture of late payment" as well as plans to enable small companies to claim interest payment penalties from those that do not pay on time. Legislation is expected next summer.

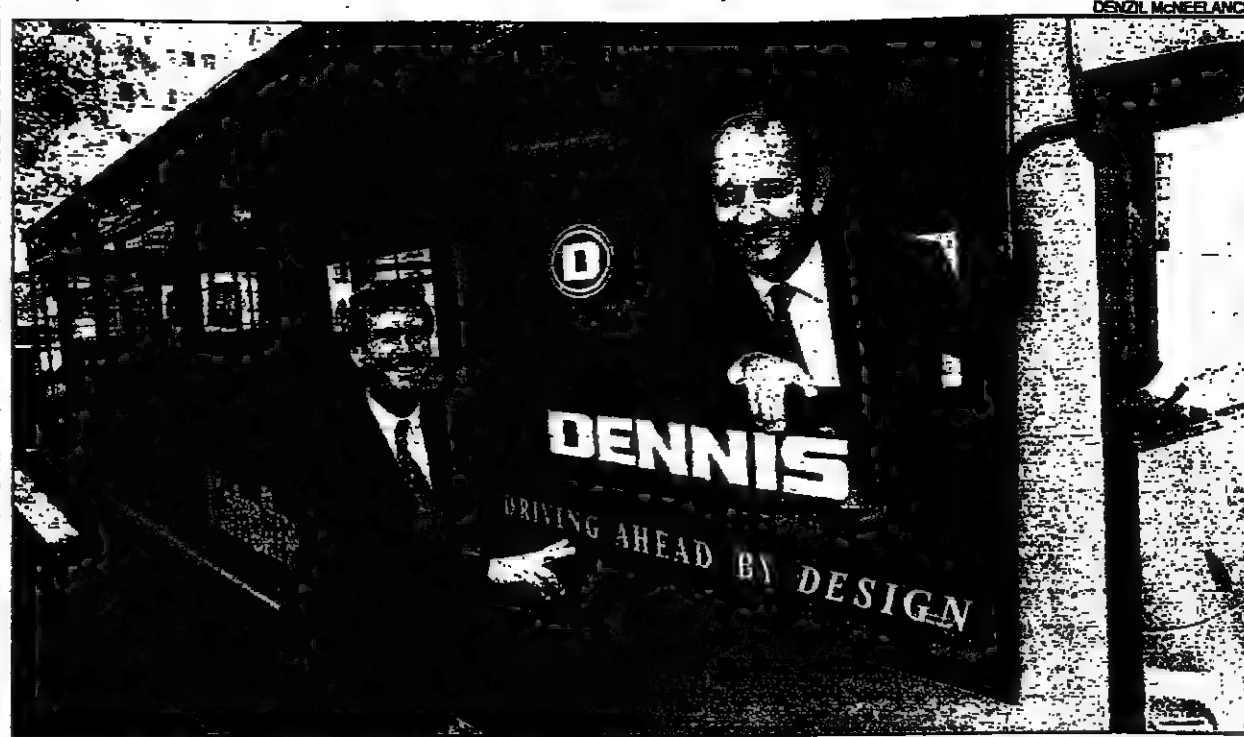
But the plans laid out in the Green Paper launched by Barbara Roche, the Industry Minister with responsibility for small business, have been roundly criticised by business groups such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors. They claim that a statutory right to interest will not reverse the practice of poor payment and will not help the cashflow of

companies that are owed payment.

According to Dun & Bradstreet, 23.2 per cent of small businesses pay on time, while 13.8 per cent of medium-sized companies make prompt payment and only 9.7 per cent of large companies meet bill deadlines.

On very late payment, 9.5 per cent of small businesses pay more than a month after they should have done. For large businesses the figure is 8.1 per cent and for medium-sized companies the rate is 4.2 per cent.

The best payers are in financial services, in which some 31.6 per cent of companies settle accounts on time. The worst performers are manufacturers, with a prompt payment rate of only 1.4 per cent.



Brendan Geary, left, finance director, and Stephen Burton will provide London's first double-deckers since privatisation

Trinity wins £12m bus order

TRINITY HOLDINGS, the maker and exporter of specialised vehicles, has won a £12 million order for double-decker London buses from Stagecoach, the transport group (Fraser Nelson writes).

for the capital since privatisation of its bus services.

Trinity made more than 1,000 buses and five engines in the six months to July 31, helping its interim pre-tax profits to rise to £9.13 million, from £8.06 million. Earnings per share rose to 10.8p (9.7p), and an interim dividend of

3.05p (2.8p) is due to be paid on January 30.

Trinity spent £500,000 restructuring its assembly plant at Warwick, absorbing all charges in the first half. A £3.7 million extension of its Guildford plant, increasing capacity by 25 per cent, is due for completion within two months.

The company intends to re-name itself Dennis Group.

Stephen Burton, chief executive, said the UK bus market is 20 per cent bigger than last year, adding £25 million to Trinity's order book, offsetting problems posed by sterling's strength. The shares rose 6 1/2 p to 302 1/2 p.

Energy group to raise £12m

By GEORGE SIVELL

INTERNATIONAL Energy Group, which has operations in the Channel Islands, Portugal, the Isle of Man and Britain, is to raise £12.38 million in a placing and a one-for-four open offer to shareholders. The company will use the proceeds to finance capital expenditure for the development of its British natural gas business.

The company said that trading for the current year is in line with expectations, with the costs associated with the development of the British natural gas business offset by profits arising from non-core property sales. It added that the development of its UK natural gas business is "accelerating at a faster rate than initially expected".

In the six months to June 30, pre-tax profits rose 35 per cent, to £5.18 million, on sales of £42.6 million (£38.8 million). Earnings per share rose from 5.61p to 7.68p. The interim dividend rises from 1.16p to 1.20p.

Swedish bank bids £1.38bn for insurer

By OUR CITY STAFF

SKANDINAVISKA Enskilda Banken, the Swedish bank, bid 16.8 billion Swedish crowns (£1.38 billion) for Trygg-Hansa, the insurance company, yesterday.

SE-banken bid 244 Swedish crowns a share and made an alternative bid of 13 A shares of the proposed new entity for every five Trygg-Hansa shares. The cash offer amounts to a premium of 30 per cent and the share offer

one of 27 per cent over the last ten days of trading.

The directors of Trygg Foundation, the largest single shareholder, with 23.7 per cent of the shares and 39.4 per cent of the votes, have agreed to accept the share offer.

The two companies estimate that the takeover will make possible annual synergy gains of the order of 775 million Swedish crowns at the pre-tax level within five years.

THE TIMES

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A CHANGING TIMES

EVERYONE RESPONDS TO A LETTER

THE TIMES FRIDAY OCTOBER 3 1997

	Sell	Buy	+/-	%
Alt Equity Inv #2	75.45	78.80	+ 0.45	3.28
Alt P/Book Inv #1	54.32	58.78	+ 0.25	0.85
Equity System PEP				
Alt Equity Inv #1	60.93	63.13	+ 0.19	0.32
Alt P/Book Inv #1	49.21	52.42	+ 0.33	0.94
Alt P/Book Inv #2				
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Amgen (S)	62.49	62.49	- 0.55	-do- Accum	179.20	188.40	+ 9.20
Amgen (S)	291.70	291.70	+ 1.70	Gold & General	168.59	180.60	+ 12.01
Amgen (S)	115.40	115.40	- 0.30	-do- Accum	174.40	186.50	+ 12.10

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Index	113.90	113.90	+ 0.80	0.75	-to- Account	421.28	447.50	+ 26.22
Index	119.80	119.80	+ 1.00	1.01	Inc Portfolio	131.88	139.70	+ 7.82
Index	31.77	31.77	- 0.54	- 1.71				

Japan	104.20	176.00	- 1.7
-de Account	171.20	182.79	- 1.8
New Europe	298.00	317.93	+2.0
-de Account	312.80	333.80	+2.2

Emergency Bd	73.80	61.90	- 1.35	-20- Accoun	754.80	894.90	+ 7.30
	57.08	60.45	+ 0.05	UK Smaller Cos	65.05	70.45	- 1.40
	82.38	94.52	- 0.21	-20- Accoun	77.25	82.51	- 1.50
and Growth	129.00	137.90	+ 1.80	Portfolio	112.20	118.50	+ 1.10

05 BIK UNIT TEST MEPS LTD
Tel: 01634 834 328 Dealing: 01634 834 313
Fax: 01634 834 329 E-mail: info@unit-test.co.uk

Inc. Acc. #	1049.80	1146.00	+21.00	3.25
100 Inc.	154.80	175.40	+ 3.30	1.88
100 Acc.	175.60	186.90	+ 3.90	1.88

MIDLAND UNIT TRUST INVEST LTD
 Tel: 0345 466 123 Fax: 0345 466 128

Johnson Inc.	107.12	107.25	+ 0.13	0.04	Corp Bond Int	105.00	104.80	+ 0.20
Johnson & Johnson	110.00	114.00	+ 4.00	5.71	debt Accrual	114.40	116.50	+ 2.10
Johnson & Johnson	123.00	128.00	+ 5.00	5.71	Equity Inc	85.57	89.39	+ 3.82
Johnson & Johnson	126.20	134.30	+ 8.10	5.71	Equity Inc	85.57	89.39	+ 3.82

Price	100.00	101.10	+10.50	3.69	40-Accum	199.00	207.00	+8.00
Accum	100.00	101.10	+12.30	3.69	High Yield	200.00	214.10	+14.10
Grain	86.75	92.40	+5.65		40-Accum	200.00	214.10	+14.10
Accum	87.07	92.63	+5.56					

Margin Gain	\$24.20	\$41.90	+ 2.90	0.07	-de- Account	\$6.94	\$6.96
Margin	\$71.90	\$95.70	+ 1.30	0.02	Monthly Income	118.40	124.03 + 1.0
Gen Co Rec	\$46.70	\$62.50	+ 1.20	..	Individual Personal Pension Unit Rest		
Gen	\$51.80	\$67.90	+ 1.10				

[illegible]

Income	713.20	694.30	+ 18.90	2.7%	Foreign Growth	280.20	279.30	+ 0.90	+ 0.3%
Trade Cn	423.50	450.60	+ 27.10	6.4%	GM & Ford Int	104.00	111.30	+ 7.30	+ 7.0%
Account	626.60	686.60	+ 60.00	9.6%	(Income)	135.50	144.10	+ 8.60	+ 6.3%

NI	739.00	49.14	+ 2.73	2.10	North American	147.00	135.50	- 0.90
NI	92.12	98.84	+ 1.56	4.00	Midland Executive Pipeline Unit Trust			
NI	84.78	80.96	+ 0.50	0.30	British	160.30	170.50	+ 0.90
NI					European Growth	165.50	176.30	+ 0.90

D SECURITIES	Mutual Fund	99.38	106.70	+ 0.4
Schwab Div: 01245 300 300	Mutual Fund	81.72	88.75	- .1
& General	Nat'l American	142.10	151.70	- 1.8

[illegible]

Return	5258.60	5311.10	+24.20	4.56	UP Canada Inc	158.80	169.60	+10.80
Volatility	479.00	500.52	+21.52	4.50	-Am. Express	165.70	176.50	+10.80
Accrual	752.80	752.50	-0.30	0.00	UK Ind Trader Inc	249.30	255.97	+6.67

Accounts	253.00	268.37	+ 6.37	5.65	Mingyi Pictos Inc	225.70	235.00	+ 9.30	4.12
Inventory	374.60	336.47	- 38.13	- 10.18	Mingyi Pictos Acc	247.70	235.50	- 12.20	- 4.93
Accounts	545.20	574.67	+ 29.47	5.42	Deposit Inc	100.29	100.29	+ 0.00	0.00

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398</
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Edinburgh Inc.	\$72.0	600.40	+ 3.40	0.01	UK Select Grabs 1	52.94	+ 0.38	-1
40 - Account	865.50	705.80	+ 4.00	0.01	UK Std Gas Omb 1	51.73	+ 0.46	1
For Freight Inc	165.00	178.70	+ 1.10	0.56				
40 - Account	258.10	263.20	+ 0.50	0.01	Amor Gold Acf 1	50.83	+ 0.15	0
Johnson Inc	52.03	53.36	+ 0.53	0.01	Amor Gold Acf 1	50.83	+ 0.15	0
ML American Inc	449.23	476.00	+ 1.20	0.44	FE - St Grabs 1	44.17	+ 0.12	0
40 - Account	457.80	463.00	+ 1.30	0.44	John Gold Acf 1	51.07	+ 0.35	0
ML Growth Inc	246.00	276.70	+ 1.00	0.01	Supacut			
Worldwide Ventures Inc	113.30	120.50	+ 0.10	0.32	Amor Std Grabs 2	43.95	+ 0.01	0
					Amor Std Grabs 2	48.14	+ 0.01	0
					Amor Std Grabs 2	52.95	+ 0.38	1
					Transatlantic PM One (Ferry Atlantic)			
					Penns to Inc (Ferry Atlantic)			

SCOTCH WHISKY FUND INCOME								
Firstly Inc	\$55.00	506.80	+ 0.20	1.00				
40 - Account	555.30	506.80	+ 0.20	1.00				

[illegible]

General Fund	258.53	1.47	0.00
Capital	1.44	0.00	0.00
Saved	50.72	- 0.57	0.00
US Growth	14.21	0.39	2.45
US Energy	98.22	- 0.24	2.44
International	10.00	0.00	3.39
The Portland Fed	87.20	- 0.00	0.00
Revenue Bond Op	101.91		
SWIFT & WILKINSON UT AMBS			
07671-037 0077			
American	555.29	073.20	- 0.00
Capital	192.49	182.40	- 2.00
			1.00
WOODBRIDGE UNIT TRUST SERIES LTD			
0761 204 4000			
US Growth	68.31	72.45	- 0.05
US Stockmarket	1,300.00	128.70	- 0.10
Corporate Bk Int	50.00	50.00	

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THE WORLD

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971) using a Shimadzu 1601 UV-Visible Spectrophotometer. The concentration of chlorophylls was expressed in mg g⁻¹ of dry weight.

Reuters to expand customer base through the Internet

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

REUTERS, the international information and news agency group, plans to counter any possible threat from online services by using Internet technology to reach a wider range of customers.

The group has launched a range of new products including Reuters Investor, a system that will allow private investors to get information for their own personal investments through bank websites.

ABN Amro in The Netherlands and Direkt Anlage, a subsidiary of Bayerische

Hypo Bank in Germany, have already begun offering the service to their customers on a website. Private investors can also use the subscription service to deal in shares. Twelve further pilot trials are now running within institutions, in six other European countries, including six British banks.

Jean-Claude Marchand, Reuters president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said the company, noted for its sophisticated dealing systems for a relatively small number of market professionals, hoped to apply Internet technologies to reach millions.

"There are some 100,000 bank branches in Europe with a need to service customers with timely and accessible information," Mr Marchand said. Reuters estimates the number of active private investors in Europe will rise from about 600,000 now to around two million by the year 2001.

Reuters will charge banks between \$15 (£9) and \$20 a month per user, depending on content, but the banks may charge a lower price or none at all for their best private investor customers.

Two other new services, Reuters Markets Monitor and Reuters Markets View, offer

packages of data, news and historic information for use on bank intranets — or private internal networks. The Markets Monitor, which will have real-time information, will cost around \$200 per user per month. The Markets View, based more on historic information, will cost around \$40. More Reuters Internet and intranet products were on the way.

The core of the Reuters business, which had £2.9 billion revenue and £701 million profit in 1996, will continue to be the 400,000 screens in financial institutions and dealing rooms. But increasingly

the company will use Internet technology to extend its reach to banks and corporations as well as private investors.

Simon Thomson, Reuters marketing director for Europe, Middle East and Africa, said: "What we are now doing is launching products that take us off the trading floor to reach areas we have not been able to reach in the past."

Mr Marchand said he did not see any threat to Reuters from the public Internet because people will continue to want the high quality information that only organisations such as Reuters could provide.

Football clubs drift offside with heavy full-year losses

By CHRIS AYRES

SHEFFIELD UNITED and Loftus Road, the football club owners, both paid heavy financial penalties for failing to get their teams into the Premier League last season.

Sheffield, which has seen its share price more than halve to 59p since it floated, yesterday revealed that its pre-tax profits of £59,000 had turned into losses of £5.9 million in the year to June 30. Turnover was £5.1 million, up 8 per cent from £4.8 million.

Loftus Road, which is chaired by Chris Wright and combines Queens Park Rangers and Wasps, the rugby club, made a £7.1 million pre-tax loss in its first year as a public company. Its share price has also slumped, from a high of 106p in January to yesterday's price of 44p.

Charles Green, chief executive of Sheffield, admitted that the shares had been overpriced at more than 100p. "What people must remember is that 78 per cent of our share price is supported by our business assets, and we have virtually no debt."

Sheffield's losses per share grew from 0.51p to 20.09p, while Loftus Road's losses stood at 20.1p. Neither company will pay a dividend.

Loftus Road yesterday said it had appointed Stephen Oakley as its new chief executive, and that Clive Berfin and Geoff Huxstep, heads of QPR and Wasps respectively, would stand down.

Silver Shield, the replacement windscreen supplier that recently bought Swansea City Football Club, has appointed Peter Day as chief executive of its sports and leisure division.



Chris Wright, chairman of Loftus Road, saw the company make losses in its first year

Accounts affair still dogs Burn Stewart

By DOMINIC WALSH

BURN STEWART Distillers, the Scotch whisky producer, continues to suffer a hangover from last year's accounting problems. Its shares, trading at around 94p before the matter came to light, fell another 2½p to 44p yesterday in spite of a sharp jump in the company's annual profits.

The accounting change insisted on by Price Waterhouse, the company's auditor, forced Burn Stewart to exclude £3.1 million of revenue and £2.3 million of profit from last year's figures. Although much of that has now been recovered, there is a £775,000 provision. Bill Thornton, chairman, admitted yesterday: "This has quite badly damaged our reputation."

At the time of the debacle, it was suggested that Price Waterhouse would probably be dropped, but Ian Bankier, managing director, said that shareholders had decided that the firm should be retained. He admitted, however, that the relationship remained strained.

The inclusion of the excluded revenue pushed annual turnover up by 29 per cent to £70 million, while the inclusion of £1.4 million of profit helped pre-tax profits to rise from £1.01 million to £3.56 million.

Mr Thornton said that although there was evidence of higher prices, profits remained under pressure and gross margins had remained static at 24.5 per cent.

Earnings per share rose from 2.94p to 3.32p. A final dividend of 1.7p makes an unchanged year's total of 3.4p.

The God Dome team shows way for public sector

Jason Nissé looks at EDS, the American data company aiding Hector the inspector

If you were casting a huddle in a futuristic thriller, you could do worse than base him on Alex Kreymer. With his cropped hair, pointy ears and accent floating somewhere between Moscow and Miami, he is a million light-years from Hector the tax inspector, the bowler-hatted figure that the Inland Revenue uses to promote self-assessment. However, he is in charge of the £1.6 billion contract for data processing that the Revenue handed to EDS, the US information technology giant.

The ten-year deal is at a critical point. Originally it was worth only £1 billion, on the basis of declining payments to EDS as it saved more and more money for the Revenue. However, the contract was controversially upped to £1.6 billion when EDS persuaded the Revenue to let it take charge of back-office operations for self-assessment.

Some eight million self-assessment tax forms are involved, and EDS has had up to 500 people working on the project at any one time, and, according to Kreymer, has delivered all systems early — including a huge data warehouse that lets tax inspectors browse through tax forms to pick up cheats and an Intranet system to link the dozens of tax offices and thousands of inspectors.

If that were not enough pressure for Kreymer and his team, the National Audit Office is to publish a report on the EDS contract this month. Awarded when Conservative privatisation was at its zenith, the deal included the transfer of 2,300 Revenue technical staff, along with their offices in Telford, Woking and Basingstoke. This was a model for "outsourcing" that the Tories planned for big areas of the public sector, notably through the Change programme that sought to privatise much of the Department of Social Security.

When the Labour Party came to power, all bets were off. In opposition, Labour had been a stern critic of EDS and had roasted the firm at a session of the Commons Public Accounts Committee.

However, as in many areas, Labour has changed its attitude as power has become a reality. EDS has recently won a share of the contract for ticketing on London Transport, work to computerise an element of air traffic control and part of a DSS consultancy agreement. It is confident of

winning more business — but there is a problem. Faced by poor financial results in the US, the headquarters in Plano, Texas (known as the "God Dome" to EDS insiders) demanded a 10 per cent cut in the headcount across the board. Kreymer has tried to insulate the Revenue team from much of this — though the DSS operation is facing up to 200 job cuts with the closure of the Swindon processing centre that EDS took over in a similar outsourcing deal. However, up to a quarter of the 2,300 Revenue staff put into EDS no longer work on Revenue projects. Not all have left EDS. Doug Topple, who had been 36 years with the Revenue, spent a year on EDS's logistics operation for

The days of making employees shave off their beards have gone

the Royal Navy and now heads an EDS team running cheque processing for the Royal Bank of Scotland. Others are working in Canada, Australia and Derby, where EDS has a big project with Rolls-Royce.

Many of the staff had been with the Revenue for decades. Alan Bell, who is now in charge of community affairs for the whole of EDS in the UK, began working as a tax inspector in Bradford in 1965. Liz Hume, EDS's human resources manager, had been with the Revenue in Glasgow, London and Telford for 26 years. "I didn't want to move," she admits. "Then I became resigned to it, then I started to accept it and then I began to look forward to it."

The switch came in two tranches — the first in June 1994, and the second 18 months later. Revenue

people found themselves working side by side with colleagues who had transferred to EDS. Many found the process frustrating, with those in the second tranche often feeling left behind. When the two sides came together, Kreymer sent each member of staff a chocolate with a note saying: "Welcome to EDS. Tranche one and tranche two are united again."

The process of bringing 2,300 staff into EDS is nothing new. Ever since General Motors bought the group from Ross Perot in the 1980s, EDS has become expert at "transitioning" people into the organisation.

The company is evangelical in its approach to "transitioning", wanting new employees not only to join it, but to love it and accept its philosophy. However, the days of making employees shave off their beards (a Perot obsession) have gone, as Paul Ballard, head of technical strategy for the self-assessment project, testifies. He had a reputation for sporting a beard and floral boots. Ballard tends to turn up in a business suit, but still likes to wear the boots occasionally to surprise people.

Joining EDS was not as much of an adverse cultural change as many of the Revenue staff had feared. Years of co-opting in the Civil Service had left many of them demotivated and concerned about their career opportunities. "In the Revenue, we were considered to be somewhere off at the side," says Sukhi Gill, a software specialist who was once a tax inspector in Bradford. "If you were a technical expert, there was a glass ceiling to promotion. But being in a technology company means there are lots of opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise."

EDS says that the project is going well, but is reluctant to divulge any figures. Technology consultancies are not averse to bearing a loss on a government project in order to win more work — as Andersen Consulting showed when it lost millions on computerising National Insurance records. How good a deal it is for the Revenue will emerge this month, but Nick Montagu, the Revenue's new chairman, has said that he is happy with EDS's work so far. The NAO report will be keenly read by ministers. It may set out the future for the running of many of Britain's public services.

Property experts fear 2000 'bomb'

By SUSAN EMMETT

THE millennium timebomb, which threatens to cause chaos for computer systems, will also affect buildings and may lower their market value, according to Savills, the property consultant.

Offices, shopping centres and factories may be disrupted on January 1, 2000, if they have systems controlled by electronic chips, Savills said.

It says that security cameras, fire alarms, lifts, escalators, air-conditioning and heating systems and back-up systems such as generators may stop working, in the worst-case scenario, if they rely on time switches.

Most vulnerable are premises built in the last property boom because they are unlikely to have millennium-compliant controls, director of Savills, said: "Buildings that do not have a millennium certification not only risk disruption in January 2000, but could already be moving towards a disadvantage in terms of market value."

The potential cost in terms of lost business is also significant, experts say. It is estimated that, for a medium-size office in the City, the loss on one day's disruption may be about £100,000. A single day of lost production across the UK could amount to as much as £1.4 billion.

One UK company has already put aside more than £600,000 to tackle the problem.

Owners put up cash to save tin mine

THE Canadian owners of Britain's last tin mine have provided a cash injection in an attempt to help the fight against its closure.

The South Crofty mine near Redruth, Cornwall, is due to close within the next few months because of mounting financial losses caused by a drop in the price of tin on the international market.

Almost 40 workers have already been laid off from the total workforce of 270 but miners are hoping to persuade the Government to agree a rescue package.

The Crew Group, which owns the South Crofty, has provided an undisclosed amount of cash to help to keep the mine working, David Giddings, managing director, said yesterday.

Clubhaus buys German golf club

By DOMINIC WALSH

CLUBHAUS, the golf club operator demerged from Ex-Landis last year, yesterday added the Nippenburg Golf Club in Stuttgart, designed by Ryder Cup hero Bernhard Langer, to its rapidly expanding portfolio.

The company is paying a nominal sum to acquire a 75 per cent stake in the club's holding company and will take over management control of a course that has hosted the last three German Open championships.

News of the deal came as Clubhaus reported a near doubling of pre-tax profits to £1.4 million in the first half of 1997, on turnover up from £3.1 million to £7 million. During that period it splashed out

around £25 million buying seven new clubs, taking its total to 15, and Charlie Parker, managing director, said it continued to seek further acquisitions, principally in the South East and in Germany.

In the first six months of the year some 155,000 rounds of golf were played on Clubhaus courses, and membership now stands at more than 10,000.

Sterling's strength against other European currencies produced an adverse foreign exchange movement on reserves of £3.4 million, and reduced operating profits by £42,000. Earnings per share rose from 0.93p to 2p, but there is no interim dividend.

Times, page 28

THE WORLD'S FIRST GSM MOBILE WITH NO ANTENNA

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FOCUS

Robin Young introduces a special report on four days of culinary exploration and adventure

Food is fast becoming Britain's favourite spectator sport. Where it was once considered a chore, associated with household drudgery, cookery has now become the fastest growing component of the leisure industry. Food is now fun.

That is why more television hours are now devoted to cooks and chefs than to footballers or cricketers. Cookbooks, also, are right up there with gardening manuals as staples of the publishing industry, and the time is fast approaching when the British will eat out more often than they do at home.

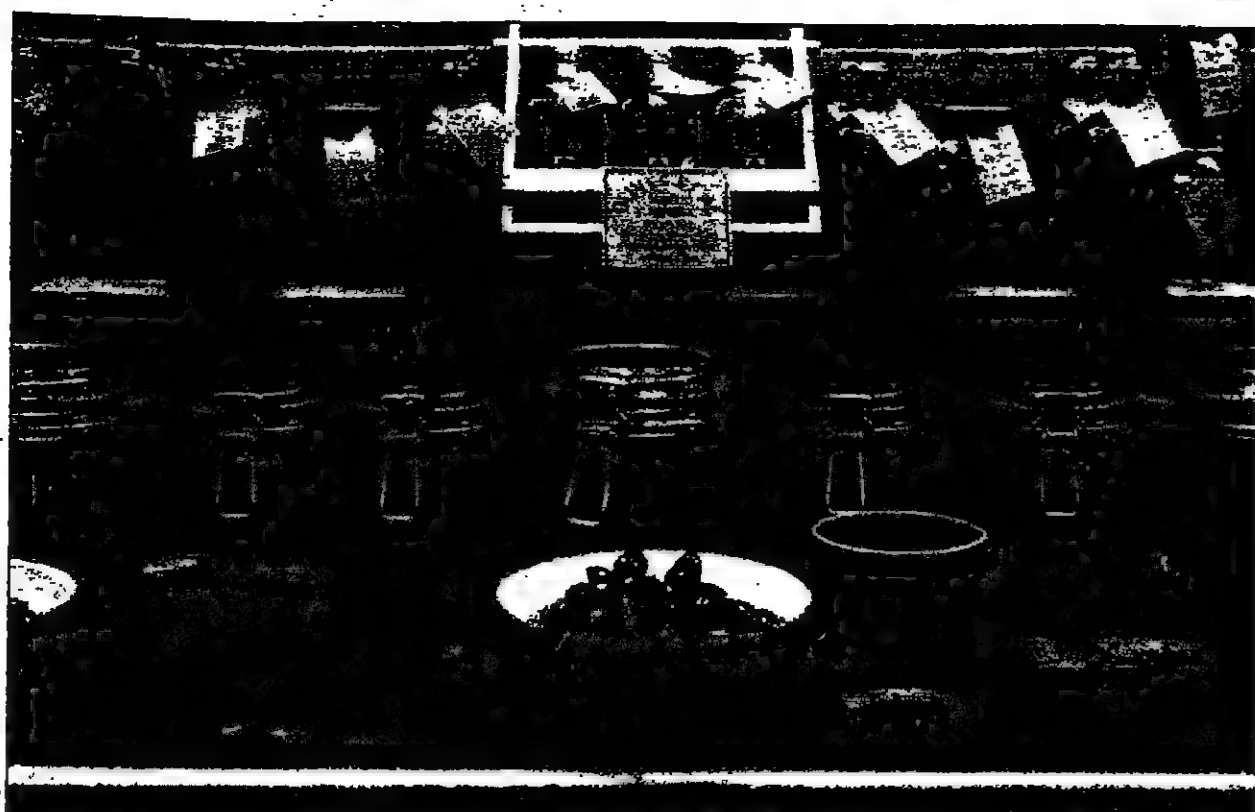
So while fewer and fewer people actually cook meals for themselves, and spend less and less time about it when they do succumb, the fascination with new-fangled means of readying food for consumption, at home, in a pub, club, bar or restaurant, or simply on the hoof, has become an almost insatiable appetite.

At the International Festival of Fine Wine and Food which begins at Olympia next Thursday there will be something for everybody. You want to degustate over the difference between native and rock oysters? Both will be there. You always wanted to know how Greeks keep their teeth while demolishing copious quantities of halva and baklava? Ask at the Greek delicacies stall.

You always wondered how different the ham from an acorn-fed pig might be? Hurry along to match a sliver of Iberian black leg Jabugo, proof that it is not only great oaks that grow from little acorns.

How about this one? Traditional hickory-smoked salmon from Scotland. No honesty, that is what it says right here in the press release. You never heard of the tradition of hickory-smoking Scottish salmon? Neither did I, but at this exhibition obviously even the traditions are new.

And as for smoking food, nothing is safe. They have smoked haggies, alligators, ostriches and springboks for your delectation. "Never tried before," the press release enthusiastically claims about the smoked haggis. Don't they realise that the haggis dates from Neanderthal times, and that in prehistoric times, in Scottish brochs and in medieval halls absolutely every-



Olives were prominently featured last year at the festival, so don't forget to pick up your extra virgin olive oil

From alligator to radioactive iguana

thing was smoked — including the haggis!

I hesitate to comment on "Iguana radioactive hot sauces from Costa Rica". You want your sauces radioactive, that's your business, but excuse me while I retire behind my solid lead bib, as provided by dentists when taking X-rays.

You cannot be too careful when picking your way around a modern food show, booty-trapped as it is likely to be with temptations such as chocolate-dipped prunes, exotic mushrooms with weird names and possibly mind-expanding potential, or ice creams impregnated with half a cupboard full of spices.

The point is that these things are fun. You get to meet people who are not ashamed to admit that they wholeheartedly enjoy food and

drink, or even derive their principal pleasure from it.

Why, these events can even be useful. Would I know how to cook scallops without turning them into a passable imitation of ice hockey pucks had I not seen Bruno Loubet lucidly explaining and demonstrating the art as just such an event?

How would I have found non-stick saucepans that actually do not stick, had I not met a persuasive salesman at Olympia? Would I have known of the existence of fruit-flavoured teas, or ever have developed a habit of nibbling chocolate-covered coffee beans if I had not been to previous years' shows?

It would be folly to pretend that I enjoy everything I encounter at such a show. Some of them (multi-flavoured

potato crisps, packeted pizzas, most ready-mixed sauces) are, to my fastidious mind, quite appalling. But at least I am fully abreast of what is out there, and what other people may be enjoying.

So this year, for example, visitors to the International Festival of Fine Wine and Food will become the first to be able to sample the New Covent Garden Soup Company's new range of fresh baked bean products — including what should be a very flavoursome baked bean casserole made with Great Northern haricot beans, molasses, Dijon mustard and garlic, a spicy version

peppered up with dry Ancho chilies from Mexico; a Mediterranean compilation of canellini and flageolet beans

with tomato and fresh tuna; and a mix of Puy lentils, aduki and mung beans with olives, pimentos, caper and thyme.

This is one range being launched at the festival which is already assured a national release (from October 10 in major supermarkets and leading grocers around the country at prices from £1.49 a carton), but there are plenty of other novelties on show which will be much less widely available.

The festival is your opportunity to ferret through all the latest innovations, to sort out the brilliant from the duff, and to put yourself ahead of all those leisure cooks sitting at home watching chefs on television. Food may have become a leisure industry, but it's only half the fun if you do not get stuck in and participate.

Britain becomes a big cheese

A guided tour
of farms and
specialists
with Kate
Weatherell

IN THE 1960s and early 1970s, British cheese was sliced from rectangular blocks. If the block was orange, it was Leicester; if chalky, Wensleydale; and if white with blue lines, Stilton. The rest was Cheddar.

Not until the mid-1980s did wedges of crusty farmhouse wheels and soft goats' and ewes' milk cheeses invade fridges. Thanks to struggling farm cheesemakers and a bunch of enthusiasts, the British cheese renaissance began and last night the winners of the fourth annual British cheese awards, sponsored by Tesco, were announced.

Seasonal fluctuations in temperature and humidity can alter a cheese's texture, flavour and acidity. Good cheese shops and delicatessens, however, will stock many and Tesco makes a point of stocking the winning cheeses.

Beenleigh Blue, made with ewes' milk, has a fudgy sweetness, a spicy blue flavour and a hint of the sea. Robin Congden, Beenleigh's creator, has taken the year-round coolness and constant humidity of the caves of Roquefort as a model for the water-refreshed airflow into his maturing rooms.

Stilton once was not deemed ripe until squirring with maggots. Now ripeness is judged by the appearance of a creamy texture. The best Stiltons, such as the mellow Colston Basset, have green veining on a cream background, rather than blue on white.

The Lancashire produced by Ruth Kirkham, one of this year's award winners, bears no resemblance to the usual plastic-wrapped rectangle. Her delicate han-

Waterloo, a yellow Guernsey milk cheese, runs like the best from a French farmhouse and has a peppery grassiness.

But the most voluptuous, meaty and pungent of them all must be Irish Milneens, the 1997 Supreme Champion of the British cheese awards.

The nanny-goat's contribution is extensive, be it Ticklemore, with its ridged dusty oyster shell rind, or Golden Cross, which matures to a well-balanced flavour. Ash-sprinkled Tynsbora, from Avon, winner of this year's best soft white cheese award, is goat heaven when ripe.

Ireland produces some stunning cheeses, not least Mine Gabhar, with a rich, velvety texture and earthy flavour.

Sheep milking has produced the likes of Berkswell, a Pecorino-style cheese that combines fruitiness with savouriness.



Take your pick from a range of British-made cheeses

CALL The Times International Festival of Fine Wine & Food hotline: 0171-244-0950 (lines are open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-2pm). Tickets cost £16 per person

HOW TO BOOK

and include free tastings and demonstrations, tasting glass, catalogue and delivery of wine and non-perishable purchases by White Arrow Express. Please note there is strictly no admission to anyone under 18 years of age.

Investing in fine wine can bring rich returns, writes Sue Spenceley Burch

There is wine — everyday plonk and the better stuff drunk on high days and holidays. And then there is wine, which is hardly ever drunk, not because it is bad, but because it is so good.

There is a healthy investment market for fine wine. Simon Staples manages the broking department at the London wine merchants Berry Bros & Rudd. He says there is no comparison with other forms of investment: if you pick the right wine, "in May 1991 you could have bought ten cases of 1990 Chateau Latour or Chateau Margaux at around £400 per case, and

Put money where your mouth is

sold them in July 1996 for at least £3,000 a case. That's a return of £20,000 and a profit of £26,000. If you had invested the £4,000 in an investment

trust over the same period, according to Reuters Hindsight, it would have yielded £7,922 — a profit of £3,922. Massive new demand from

the Far East has driven prices sky high. Fine wine has suddenly become a status symbol, but with relatively little experience, these new wine drinkers turn for advice to Robert Parker Jr, reputedly the world's most famous wine writer, who writes for *Wine Advocate*, an American magazine.

His opinions are so highly regarded that the market apparently follows wherever he leads. Wine trade insiders believe that Mr Parker now has so much influence that some Bordeaux chateaux are secretly adapting their wines to his tastes.

Mr Staples says: "Parker grades wines out of 100 and when he gives a wine the magical 100 points, the price shoots up. Some people are taking ridiculous gambles based on what he says. He rates new wines out of the cask — but they still have two more years in the barrel. You could be completely disappointed when it has matured."

Simon Woods, editor of the *Which? Wine Guide*, says: "I have heard of expensive wine being opened and then mixed with Coca-Cola, because the owner didn't like the taste. Very few wines have investment potential. The prime area is Bordeaux, but only 50 out of thousands of wines are worth looking at. There hasn't been a really good vintage since 1990."

For someone just starting, and looking to capitalise on their investment in five years, Mr Staples says: "Don't go for the very top wines. Instead look at, say, a 1986 Pichon-Longueville-Lalande. This wine is highly Parker-rated and is currently £1,000 a case."

In general, Mr Staples recommends buying wine by the case: "Whole cases are much easier to sell. Don't just buy a few bottles from a shop unless it is an amazing bargain. You should also keep your wine in a bonded warehouse. Duty and VAT are only payable when the wine is taken out of bond, but you can sell it without moving it."

Buy five or ten cases rather than just one — unless it is the ultimate, top wine. You could buy larger lots from lesser chateaux — say 50 cases of 1996 Chateau Ponsot-Canet. Rated highly by Parker, it currently costs £200 per case. Mr Staples believes you could soon double your money.

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Frances Bissell describes the preparations she and fellow professional cooks put into their demonstrations in the Celebrity Kitchen

Game to put on a bit of a show

I had to smile when I saw the Celebrity Kitchen timetable of events. With *Easy Autumn Entertaining*, I thought I was the only one being evasive about what I was going to cook. But no, we have *Autumn Evenings* from Brian Baker; *Winter is Upon Us* from Henry Harris; *A Seasonal Menu* from Sue Lawrence; *Winter Warmers Made Easy* from Herbert Berger; and more in the same vein, which some of you might think irritatingly vague. But it is not that at all. I promise you, cooks love preparing food in season, and when Lyn Hall asks us, in the late spring, what we are going to be cooking for the festival in mid-October, I, for one, find it impossible to decide. I am still cooking asparagus and salmon trout, Jersey Royals and gooseberries, and it is difficult to think about autumnal food. Even now, although I know I shall be cooking game and have tested the recipe for it, I shall not know until the day before my demonstration whether it will be pheasant or widgeon. Fortunately, my recipes are adaptable and the one I have in mind can be used for a range of game with only minor adaptations.

Game is a popular theme this year, and probably Herbert Berger, Hugo Arnold and I will not be the only ones cooking it. A marvellous ingredient to work with, game is especially good for cookery

demonstrations, which are strictly time-controlled. The best way to cook game is quickly and simply, to retain its flavour and texture, and then march it with lively, unusual or season accompaniments.

Those with a sweet tooth have plenty of choice this year. James Martin offers *Great Fruity Puddings* and Matthew Hardy, of the *Cordon Bleu*, introduces festive desserts with a new look in his demonstration, entitled *Sugar and Spice*. My own offering in the pud department is possibly

ery demonstrations is Lyn Hall, of La Petite Cuisine fame. She is who has got us all organised into a schedule, persuaded us to provide our recipes in good time, and then looks after us when we arrive. She runs a military-style operation with runners, mobile phones and a trolley and helper waiting for us outside. Here we unload and make our way to the preparation kitchen.

The first time I did one of these demonstrations, I came laden with pots and pans and containers, as well as cooking utensils and knives. Like most cooks and chefs, I carry my knives with me wherever I go to cook, but Lyn has the kitchen well stocked with the very best equipment, including serving dishes and neat little containers for the weighed-out ingredients. All I need to do now is bring everything in labelled, sealed, plastic bags, and the mix on place for each dish goes into a separate carrier bag. I feel much less like a packhorse when I arrive at Olympia these days.

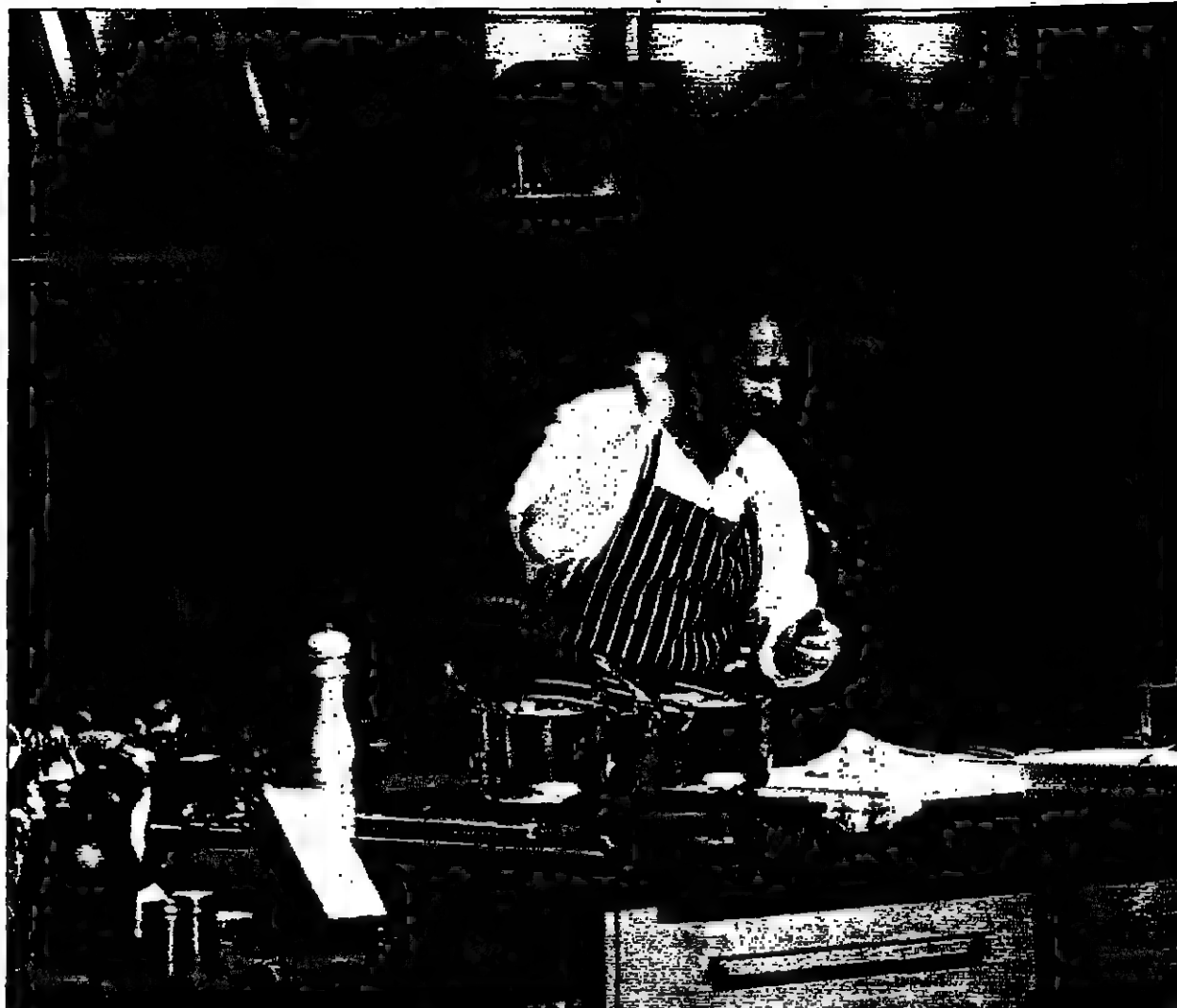
Each of us is instructed by Lyn to be ready 15 minutes in advance, and not, under any circumstances, to overrun our slot.

She does not, I should add, check that our finger nails are not grubby, and ask us if we have a clean handkerchief, but I sure she could get away with it.

We have to be ready 15 minutes in advance, and must not overrun our slot

one of the simplest recipes you will ever come across. It requires only two ingredients, one of them chocolate. Maria José Sevilla, best known as an expert on Spanish and Mediterranean food, cooks with wine, and Anthony Tobin with olive oil. Top London tables are represented by Will Elsenner from the Dorchester, Anton Edelmann from the Savoy, and Antony Worrall Thompson from his new restaurant, W02. Alastair Little will be presenting dishes from his cookery course at La Cacciata in Tuscany.

However, the real star of this four-day festival of cook-



Celebrity cook Alastair Little, who will be presenting dishes from his cookery course at La Cacciata in Tuscany

In from the cold

Austrian wines return after scandal over 'antifreeze'

MENTION Austrian wines to many people and they will recall memories of the scandal in which "antifreeze" was used as a sweetening additive, with disastrous consequences for Austrian exports.

Austria now has one of the most strictly controlled wine industries in the world, but it is still seeking its rightful recognition as a producer of fine quality wines.

This year, for the first time, Austrian wines will be featured at the International Festival of Fine Wine and Food, at Olympia in London from October 9 to 12.

Unusual grape varieties, the peculiarities of Austrian micro-climates and the minerals in Austrian soils, as well as deeply imbued wine-making traditions, give Austria's finest wines exceptionally musky and spicy flavours, reminiscent of an exotic oriental bazaar.

Austria's most widely planted grape is the Grüner Veltliner, which produces much bland and ordinary wine but in its finer examples packs a fiery, spicy flavour, like white pepper. Welschriesling and Müller-Thurgau (often labelled Riesling x Silvaner) are two other popular Austrian white grapes, with Blaufränkisch and Blauer Portugieser the most widely planted reds.

Austrian wines tend to be far more full-bodied, alcoholic and beefy than those of its northern neighbours. Germany, and a good deal finer than almost anything its eastern neighbours can offer.

ROBIN YOUNG

Spain pops champagne's bubble

Cava is so successful even French champagne houses such as Moët et Chandon are making the prizewinning sparkling wine, says Edward Owen

If experts told you a £530 bottle of Spanish cava and a £60 bottle of French champagne were as good as each other, which would you buy? Wine buffs undertaking a blind tasting for *Wine magazine's* International Wine Challenge chose a Spanish cava as the best budget sparkling wine of the year.

The judges said that Freixenet's Segura Viudas Heredad Brut "puts a lot of the French competition to shame". In the judging for the Brut and Extra Dry Trophy, the same cava and another from Freixenet, level-pegged with several very expensive champagnes for the silver award.

The huge rise in the popularity of cava — mainly produced in the Penedès region of

Catalonia, in northeastern Spain — has ironically been achieved since it was categorised with its own Denomination of Origin. It was forced to stop calling itself champagne even though it is strictly produced by the *methode champenoise*.

Much of the success of the Spanish bubbly is due to the high standards and aggressive marketing of the two main cava producers, Freixenet and Codorniu.

"The tastings show that people who know a lot about wine found cava to be on a par with champagne," says Ma-

nuel Duran, the deputy chairman of Freixenet, which has 100 million bottles in its cellars in Sant Sadurn.

In their Wine Challenge category, Segura Viudas Heredad (£11.50) and the Freixenet cava supplied for the Safeway cava Brut label (£5.30) received a silver award alongside the likes of Dom Perignon Prestige Cuvée (£60.40).

But cava producers claim that they are not trying to compete with champagne and point out that the latter's sales have not fallen because of cava's success. Globally, cava

now accounts for 35 per cent of sparkling wine sales while champagne takes 25 per cent.

"We are not trying to imitate champagne," Señor Duran emphasises. "We are trying to make a good sparkling wine and it seems we have achieved this. The explanation for the growing boom in cava is that more and more people are looking for value for money."

In the UK, champagne still sells more because of its image. "It is prestigious to give someone a bottle that has cost £60. It is a good present. But a bottle of cava costs about £7 and our top award winner is

about half the price of the average champagne," he adds.

In the UK last year, Freixenet sales jumped a third and accounted for 60 per cent of the 6.5 million bottles of cava sold. Freixenet also supply Marks & Spencer and Tesco. Codorniu's Cuvée Raventós Brut, launched this year to celebrate the bodega's 125th anniversary, is selling well in the UK at the upper end of the cava market. Two advantages of cava's price and quality, available from semi-seco to brut, are that tipplers are happier to use it rather than an expensive champagne

for making cocktails or for seafood and desert recipes that demand champagne.

Moët et Chandon own one of the 280 cava bodegas in Spain, which last year, collectively, sold 83 million bottles at home and 60.7 million abroad. Ten years ago Moët started producing their first cava in Catalonia and this year expects to export 60 per cent of 700,000 bottles. In Spain, Moët's cava label is Chandon whereas in Britain it is called Torre de Gall (£7.99).

"We decided to use our tremendous savoir-faire to try to produce the best sparkling wine," Marc Féré, the export manager in Barcelona, says. "Here we are not fighting the big boys — just aiming for a premium brand."

Be bold and fruity — enjoy wine

The International Festival of Fine Wine and Food acknowledges and emphasises the partnership of food and wine that is an everyday fact of life in countries where wine is produced and regarded as a staple beverage.

In Britain, however, an element of mystery still surrounds the subject. This mystery is compounded by a number of myths and rules.

Take, for example, the best known rule — red wine with meat, white with fish. It is rubbish, and always has been. In wine-producing countries, there is no shortage of recipes for fish cooked in red wine. Many people find young, fresh and fruity red wine, possibly served chilled, as delightful with most fish dishes as any white. Even salmon steak sits happily alongside pink wine or a light

red, while darker fleshed oil-rich fish such as mackerel, sardines and tuna are as compatible with full-bodied red wines as red meat.

Now pay attention. When correctly drawn attention to the fact that many white wines made from chardonnay grapes have a "buttery" texture, they are in fact telling you that it will go with dishes you might want to eat with butter or a butter sauce.

That would include, for example, salmon steak, or smoked salmon (usual accompaniment, brown bread and butter) — but also possibly a beef steak, which is often served topped with a blob of *maitre d'hotel* butter. And of course, chardonnay is the grape which makes the classic white burgundies which are the standard recommended partners for salmon dishes.

Confused by the 'rules' of drinking? Robin Young offers his advice

and a good white alternative to go with steak or chops.

Cabernet sauvignon is commonly described as having a blackcurrant flavour, or flavours of "red berry fruits". It goes well with meat dishes that might be accompanied with fruit sauces or jellies from similar sources. Cabernet franc, its fellow constituent of many clarets, is reckoned to have flavours akin to redcurrants. Redcurrant jelly is, of course, a recognised partner for lamb.

Merlot, the other important claret grape, has a plummy flavour. Plum sauces are favoured in Chinese cuisine to go with duck — but the French also like duck with blackcurrants.

Someone is likely now to say "But I like duck with cherries", or if they are really old-fashioned "I love duck à l'orange". For the cherry flavour I suggest something Italian made with sangiovese (chianti classico would be fine), while the orange lovers are probably more likely to prefer a citric white — an Austrian riesling might prove an inspired choice.

So it goes on. Beaujolais reminds some people of bananas, which recalls to my mind a dish of my youth called chicken Maryland, seldom seen nowadays, but proof that banana flavoured can go very pleasantly with chicken, as can bejolais. Zinfandel and syrah are often said to

taste of blackberries. Step forward those who love bramble jelly.

Bear in mind too that these intensely fruity red wines can also go with chocolate. Choclates, after all, come with fruit-flavoured centres. This whole business of discussing the partnership between wine and food should be about promoting new and imaginative couplings, not about compiling rule books trying to restrict or inhibit choice.

So among the whites the light dry wines of several varieties are described as "lemony" — which is why they go well with the sort of fish often served with lemon slices, or with chicken, which can also be cooked in various lemon recipes.

Sauvignon blanc tastes somewhat like gooseberries. The French have little use for gooseberries, but do some-

times serve them as a garnish to mackerel. Try that — sauvignon and mackerel is terrific. There is a source for further inspiration: dry white sauvignon is the classic accompaniment in France for goat's cheeses, and therefore a candidate to go with other cheeses too.

Of other whites, chenin blanc is most frequently linked to apples. It makes one think of apple sauce with pork, fried apple slices with black pudding, and apple used in cabbage dishes. Gewürztraminer is reckoned spicy, and likened to lychees.

My suggestion is that instead of disregarding wine commentators' descriptions as fanciful, you should take them as a basis for what food that wine might accompany really well. Be bold! Enjoy!

Kate Weatherell looks at the specialist party organisers who provide food on the hoof and the razzmatazz

Fancy a fried cockroach or a custard pie fight?

At the top end of the market "outside catering" for weddings, anniversaries and especially business functions — is growing grander and grander. In the business, it is better known as "location catering".

This means providing five-star restaurant standard food in a severely limited period of time at a venue that might be a field, a museum or a warehouse for as many as 1,000 people or even more.

"Imagine," says Johnny Roxburgh of party organisers and caterers, The Admirable Crichton, "arriving home from work at 6pm and having to provide dinner for 900 people by 7.15pm."

This is virtually what he and the Admirable Crichton staff had to do for the British Fashion Awards dinner staged at the Natural History Museum last year and what they will be doing there once again next week.

Though spectacular with its dinosaurs and soaring vaulted ceilings, this location is always a challenge for the caterer who is barred from the public areas until 6pm when the last museum visitor leaves. Details of how the event will be staged next week are locked tightly away at The Admirable Crichton. But for last

year's fashion awards, Mr Roxburgh transformed the main stairway, into a waterfall flanked with naked men painted as zebras. The torrent flowed from the mouth of a huge African mask.

"It always amazes me how these young chefs produce five-star restaurant food for such numbers out of a kitchen which has only existed for two hours," he says. The kitchen has to be right. This means that when looking at a venue the practical considerations are key. Are the floors level for the ovens? How much refrigeration do you require? Power? Water? Loos?

Recently Caprice Events, which caters privately primarily for regulars from the restaurants Le Caprice and The Ivy, organised the Tate Gallery's centenary gala dinner. With 550 guests sitting down for three courses, this was the largest dinner ever to be held there.

Both starter and pudding were cold, but the main course ambitiously involved a roast fillet of sea bass: not a dish that can hang around for long either in an oven or on a table top.

"This was a military operation with 15 ovens and 25 chefs in two self-built temporary kitchens," says Tamsyn Kenyon, Events' organiser. "We brought in the electric, the generator, the lot."

Recently an American CD-Rom company was launching a computer game involving cockroaches taking over New York. The event took place at London Zoo. "We served fresh cockroaches and mini scorpions sautéed to order and sweet ants," said Tania Hirschberg of the catering company As You Like It. "Of course we had the usual Thai fishcakes with coconut dip and black bean and chicken on prawn crackers, but the press seemed to prefer the insects..."

For special events, people want something different. There's the story from Australia about a fish barbecue in Melbourne where the host threw live fish into his swimming pool. The guests were handed rods and nets. The chefs guinea and grilled to order.

There are other ways of making an event special. A cruise round the storeroom of Rhubarb Food Design is a revelation in canapé presentation. At weddings you may be proffered a canapé from the brim of a straw hat, or a tiny silver spoon of caviar on a velvet tassled cushion. There are strips of Astroturf woven with daisies and scattered with mooring plastic cows for the beef carpaccio canapé, remoulded car tyres, sci-fi landscapes, tipper trucks etc.

"We like to give them a little more than they expected. It's the little things that make people laugh," explains Lucy Gemmel of Rhubarb. She places great emphasis on

menu design. Food should be kept as uncomplicated as possible. The bread should be great, the canapés and petit fours memorable and the coffee good. The starter and pudding should shine and the main course should be simple and delicious.

More temperamental dishes can be served on location but must be tried and tested. Rhubarb's aubergine and Parmesan soufflé served in a hollowed artichoke has held up for 300 guests in the past. "It's not like a restaurant with a static kitchen where you can perfect a menu," adds Ms Gemmel. "In location catering you never know what will happen next. It is always different."

Out beyond the doors of restaurants, catering is still about "location and location". Party organiser William Bartholemew says he has never turned a party down due to location or through logistical difficulties.

He once ran a smart cocktail party in a decorated London warehouse. After 30 minutes of drinking, four large curtains were lifted to reveal 3,000 custard pies to the insouciant guests. Cocktail dresses, dinner jackets and all, they started throwing them. It can be amazing where you find yourself, he says.



Jumbo party: elephant displays at a private function



Walking is encouraged

School run is under fire

This month, all schools in Surrey — more than 500 of them — will receive their Safe Routes to School Challenge. The idea is that schools try to convince the 51 per cent of children who arrive by car that there is a cheaper and often healthier way.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of traffic on roads during term time is ferrying children and that this can reach 40 per cent at peak times.

The Surrey Challenge is the latest instalment in a project to encourage more children to walk and cycle to school. Surrey County Council, funded by the DoT, has undertaken an intense study in Frimley, a modern suburban development near Camberley, where 12 schools share key routes. There were significant differences between secondary and primary schools, girls and boys and going to and from schools.

Sarah Duckworth, Surrey Council's project leader, says: "Sometimes it's a question of whether there is a second car in the family and sometimes it's a question of schools having a culture where the mums like to stop and talk, travel together and the children likewise."

Parental concern about danger is a major factor. Twice as many parents worried about their children walking and cycling to primary school as travelling by train or bus. In Frimley, for example, although few had far to travel, two thirds of parents drove their children to school.

Fears of parents declined considerably at secondary school level and the numbers who drove children to school halved. More than half those going to the highly rated comprehensive, Tomlinson, walked. Twelve per cent of the secondary boys and 1 per cent of the girls cycled to school. Almost 10 per cent of those dropped off at school walked back, suggesting that parents could fit in the trip on their way to work but not on their way back.

The council is considering a range of solutions: cycle proficiency for both parents and children, cycle tracks and better and secure facilities for bikes at the school all have their place. Better road crossing would help to encourage walking.

Nearly all parents felt that their children would benefit from walking and cycling more often. Ten years ago children walked 50 miles a year more than they do today and cycled ten miles more a year. Almost all children in the Frimley area own bikes.

Secondary school children who travelled by car stated (in order of importance) it was because their parents "came that way". It was too far to walk and their parents preferred it that way. Fewer than 10 per cent said it was either more convenient or faster. At sixth-form level the car problem rears its head in a slightly different way with nearly 40 per cent of pupils driving themselves to college.

Dr John Trig, deputy head of Tomlinson School, says: "Fear of traffic among parents is rather like their fear of their children being attacked. It's vastly exaggerated by their feeling that the odd story they read in the national press is being repeated every day locally. We have a real parking problem with parents. To break the cycle there needs to be both national and local initiatives."

Children at Tomlinson were asked for a "wish list of improvements" to encourage them to walk, cycle or use public transport more often. These included more and safer places to cross the roads; cycle paths separated from traffic; footpath links; a reduction and slowing of traffic; bus stops nearer home and school; better lighting; more policemen, lollipop ladies and traffic wardens; and special school buses so that parents and children can travel together.

Some independent schools are not as successful as they may seem, says John Rae

The heads' tail end

MARGARET KESBY



The annual meeting of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) takes place next week in Brighton. The spartan living and frugal fare once associated with these occasions have been replaced by the comfortable surroundings of a four-star hotel. One item on the agenda, however, is likely to give those attending an uncomfortable ride.

A millennium working party has been sounding members' opinion on the future of HMC. No one expects its report to be radical because members are in favour of the status quo, but there is one awkward question that cannot be avoided. Should the qualification for membership of HMC be changed?

The present qualifications are that 30 per cent of pupils over 13 must be studying for two or more A levels, and 75 per cent of A-level candidates must achieve a pass grade in at least two subjects.

By linking the qualification to the school's performance at A level, HMC signalled that it stood for academic standards and that prospective parents could be assured that a school whose head was in membership of HMC would not let them down academically.

It must have seemed a sensible way of restricting membership to a manageable size but it has turned out to be a trap. As the number of A-level passes has risen, either because candidates are working harder or because the exam is getting easier, the academic qualification for membership of HMC has lost credibility. League tables have exposed the long tail of academically weak HMC schools, some of whose results are so poor they do not appear on the league table at all.

The requirement that 75 per cent of candidates obtain two A-level passes is now so undemanding that those weak schools have been allowed to hang on to membership even though their academic performance does not justify it. If HMC wishes to be seen to represent the leading academic "boys" and coeducational independent schools, it will have to raise the academic qualification for entry.

The new hurdle should be set at a level that carries conviction with prospective

parents. An average points score of six, or grade C for each subject entry at A level, would be about right. If a school failed to reach this standard for three consecutive years, the head's membership of HMC would be withdrawn. On the evidence of this year's Times league table, about 40 HMC schools, that is 16 per cent of the membership, would be at risk, including such familiar names as Blundell's, Rossall and Stowe.

The heads at Brighton will be reluctant to consider such a proposal. Though they compete for pupils, they rely on one another for friendship and

support. HMC is above all a good club. But unless they face this question, the status and the competitive edge that membership of HMC gives their schools will disappear. From its early days, HMC has been the arbiter of which schools could properly be called public schools. Few people talk about public schools today but an informal ranking exists nevertheless. The so-called "top boys' schools" are the members of HMC. Schools in the second rank are members of the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools (SHMIS). Some

of the latter are widely regarded as better than the weaker members of HMC but because they are small and have different priorities, such as the development of pupils who need learning support, they do not qualify for membership. Not surprisingly, some members of SHMIS think HMC's attitude perpetuates old snobberies. Though they value their own organisation, they would like to see HMC abandon its academic qualifications and open its doors to all good boys' and coeducational schools. The heads at Brighton will not like this proposal either.

The weaker HMC schools desperately need the added value of membership. No one will put it in those terms. Instead, it will be argued that opening the door to SHMIS schools will make HMC too large. But if all SHMIS schools were allowed to join, HMC membership would rise from 240 to 290, an increase of only a few members in each regional division where most routine business is discussed.

The argument about the size of HMC is a red herring. Reluctance to change, whether by raising the academic hurdle or by admitting all good schools, regardless of A-level results, is all about protecting the weaker schools already in membership. HMC's seal of approval fills empty places.

Only those heads whose schools meet rigorous entry criteria are admitted," explains one of the school guides consulted by parents, "and this helps to ensure that HMC is synonymous with high-quality education." What the guides do not tell parents is how modest the rigorous entry criteria now are. If parents knew that all a school needed was 75 per cent of candidates passing two A levels, they would soon lose faith in HMC as a guarantor of high-quality education.

That is why, for the heads in Brighton, the status quo is not an option. They have to choose between restoring HMC's academic credibility at the expense of up to 40 schools, and dropping the academic qualification altogether and merging with SHMIS. They will almost certainly opt for the latter. Admitting new members is much less painful than ejecting old friends.

This merger will pave the way for another. The Girls' Schools Association (GSA), which has 220 members, admitted as good independent schools regardless of A-level results, is an obvious partner. A merger between GSA and HMC would strengthen the unity of the independent sector, save money and give the heads of independent secondary schools more clout with the Government, the media and governing bodies.

These changes will not happen overnight but in Brighton next week they will be set in train.

The author is a former chairman of HMC.

Why lifelong lessons work

Tony Mooney on a survey that compares US and British results

Our politicians are adept at creating the impression that schools are underperforming and that this will adversely affect our ability to compete in world markets. Reference is often made to tables comparing the poor performance of our children in maths and science tests with those from other countries. The politicians argue that unless our schools educate children to the levels achieved in other developed countries, then our economy will suffer.

How then do they explain last week's report showing 13-year-olds in Britain outperforming those in the United States in mathematics and science? Both countries finished below such economic powerhouses as Norway and Romania. American children consistently perform less well in the tests than their British counterparts, yet the American economy is thriving.

Nor is the relatively poor performance of American children in comparative tests a new phenomenon: as long ago as 1983, the US Department of Education in the oft-quoted report *A Nation at Risk* highlighted the so-called "sorry" state of American education. "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament."

So why is the poor performance of American schools not yet having the devastating effect on the US economy that so many economists predict?

One theory suggests that a highly educated workforce is not necessary to compete in the global marketplace. All that is needed is a highly educated elite that can carry out the research, make the scientific and technological discoveries and then apply and market the new knowledge. The rest of the workforce need only be educated to the functional level necessary to maintain a modern infrastructure. It is argued that America has more or less reached the fine balance that is needed to keep itself ahead of its competitors. This line of argument is, however, not supported by the facts. The questionable performance is not affecting the nation's economy because of other educational factors of which we need to take note.

Americans do not see education as ending when they leave school

First, most Americans do not see education as ending when they leave school at the age of 18. There is an expectation that most students will go on to college to further their learning and then advance it even further when they start work. Companies are more geared to training and developing their employees than many in the UK and as a result learning is a life-long process.

A second factor in keeping the US out in front is its attitude to what constitutes useful knowledge as taught in its universities. We have too readily accepted that any subject studied in higher education is useful preparation for the commercial world. American courses are much more scientific and technologically based.

The American experience suggests that the health of a nation's economy is not necessarily linked to the performance of its schools. Our politicians need to concentrate their energies on promoting the idea of lifelong education to improve the nation's productivity.

Fred Redwood gives advice on parents' evenings

A month of the new term has passed and it is time for the schools to organise the first of their parents' consultation evenings. Although potentially beneficial and informative, these events often, sadly, amount to little more than a polite ritual.

Teachers take shelter behind the specialist language of education-speak, firing off reams of National Curriculum scores, while stunned parents gain very little real understanding of the progress of their children.

In order to make the most of parents' evenings it is wise to follow a carefully prepared "game plan". Parents and child should look through the term's workbooks and files. While keeping the atmosphere positive, they should discuss specific topics which pose problems.

It is sometimes forgotten that parents have a role to play as their child's representative at the parents' evening. After all, it is often easier for an adult to make a teacher aware of a problem with learning than it is for the child to do so by speaking up in class. So this discussion should be taken seriously.

During the consultation evening itself, parents should ensure that they gain an accurate picture of the child's ability. The meaning-curriculum levels are too broad to be meaningful: pupils may take over a year to move from one level to the next. So teachers should be questioned about how the child performs in relation to the year group. The results of any other standardised forms of testing that the school may use should also be requested.

When teachers mention national curriculum levels parents should ask what they mean in relation to skills acquired. It is vital that they are not palmed off with the "average ability, making satisfactory progress" opt-out clause. Assessment must be accurate because if a child is beginning to fall behind then this could be the best time to employ a home-tutor.

The question of seating arrangements is important. It is not uncommon for teachers to arrange classroom groupings so that an industrious pupil is partnered with a disruptive one — the former to exert a good influence on the latter. That's fine if the arrangement has the planned effect.

However, if your child is the better motivated of the pair and progress is hindered by this social altruism then it is time to complain. It is also a good idea to ask the child's opinion regarding where he works most productively — at the front or back of the class and with whom. If the teacher agrees with the assessment there

Before you meet Sir, do your homework



Parents benefit from a game plan

is no reason why accommodation should not be made for these wishes.

The question of behaviour is a very sensitive one. Some teachers are reluctant to report incidents of misbehaviour to parents, suspecting that it reflects badly on their classroom discipline. Others have high-minded ideas about the sanctity of the teacher-pupil relationship. Personally, I believe it is important that parents know how their children conduct themselves at school. They should certainly refer to the issue if the teacher does not bring it up.

It is very important that parents understand what is required of their children in terms of academic commitment. The teachers supervise work in school but parents have a role to play in checking that homework is being completed satisfactorily. They should ask when homework is set and which topics are due to be covered in the coming months. Nearly all comprehensive — and many primary schools too — now issue homework organiser books. The parent's evening is the time to check the school policy for commenting in and signing these helpful "diaries" when homework has been completed.

Information should also be obtained about the amount of help each teacher finds acceptable with homework. Some more enlightened schools set homework tasks which specifically require the involvement of parents. However, this is very much a matter for each individual teacher. The amount of parental help which is acceptable also varies a good deal from subject to subject.

For example, an English teacher may welcome co-operation in checking through a first draft of writing: helping to correct spelling and sentence construction. No teacher can pay such close attention to each piece of work from every child in a class, so help will most likely be welcomed.

However, a mathematics teacher may demand a single, preferred approach to problem-solving. The contribution of teaching methods from your old school days may make for confusion. Most importantly, some homeworks may take the form of course-work assignments for GCSE, in which case parents must offer no help whatsoever. So the issue of homework must be broached.

Too many parents leave parents' evenings having learnt little beyond the anecdotal. A planned strategy for approaching these meetings ensures that they gain the hard information to which they are entitled.



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Information about the department may also be found on the World Wide Web: <http://www.durham.ac.uk/~math/>

Further details and an application form may be obtained from the Director of Personnel, University of Durham, Old Shire Hall, Durham DH1 1TA, to whom applications (5 copies) should be submitted, including the names of three referees. (Candidates outside the British Isles may submit one copy only). Tel: +44 (0)191 374 3140, fax: +44 (0)191 374 7282 or e-mail: recruitment@durham.ac.uk

Closing date: Friday 31 October 1997. Please quote reference CMA6.

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FOCUS

LOMBARD TOP CLUB TROPHY

Today a dream comes true for 16 amateur golfers. Geoff Harwood introduces Europe's biggest pro-am tournament



1996 winners Ged Furey and Geoff Wilson: 110,000 amateurs were striving to emulate them this year

Steady hands needed as the cameras whirr

The surroundings at The Belfry, home of the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), are as familiar to Doug Macdonald as the clubs in his bag. A businessman whose company shines the PGA's family silver, he played his first tentative strokes on the lush fairways of the Brabazon course before it was pitched to prominence by the Ryder Cup.

Such close proximity with the rise and rise of European golf did not immediately rub off, for it is only in recent times that Macdonald has progressed to a respectable 13 handicap.

Yet in the Algarve in the coming days, against the disconcerting whir of television cameras, Macdonald and Mike Passmore, the professional at his present club, Drayton Park — little more than a Tiger's drive from his old stamping ground — will tee off in the grand final of Europe's biggest pro-am tournament, the Lombard Top Club Trophy.

After the first-class success of the Ryder Cup, it is the turn of golf's club class to take the spotlight at San Lorenzo, less than a decade old yet already considered to be among the three finest courses on the Continent. For five days 16 pro-am pairs from across Britain and Ireland will be pampered like the professionals of the PGA European Tour.

The scale of the tournament, in only its third year, can be measured by the decision of Lombard, the country's largest finance house, to invest a further £15 million to take the Top Club Trophy to the millennium. "It works both as a sponsorship and a business issue. Sport does capture the imagination of people inside and outside the company," Stewart Legg, the group chief executive, says.

As winter turned to spring — with 110,000 amateur hopefuls from 1,100 clubs setting off on a series of qualifying rounds leading

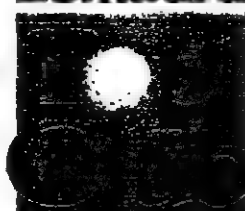
to the regional finals — Macdonald could only have dreamt of the pine-clad paradise at San Lorenzo.

"It is certainly the biggest sporting event I have ever been involved in," Macdonald says. "Anything of this proportion is quite mind-boggling. I have got to know a lot of people at my club because everyone is rooting for us. Everyone is pulling together."

Today, a party of 120 players, members of the back-up team and the cameras that will film the tournament, to be shown on Sky Sports on October 14, will be transported via TAP Air Portugal to their billet at the five-star Hotel Dona Filipa, at Vale do Lobo.

After a rigorous round of practice the grand final, played over 36 holes of better-ball medal play across two days, tees off on Sunday.

Lombard



Trophy

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE PGA

At stake, from a final prize-fund of nearly £22,000, is £4,000 for the winning professional — and a chance to win a Peugeot 106 for a hole in one at the par-three 5th — with golf clubs for his amateur partner.

For the PGA, the trophy is an opportunity to nurture golf's grass roots, encouraging people to take up the game, with the backing of

that encompasses a wide range of handicaps and a tremendously wide range of backgrounds.

The first professional to appear in two consecutive grand finals, Marcus Groombridge, was driven by the powerful desire to return to San Lorenzo this year. "It is a tremendous tournament. It gives the club players the chance of being on television and there are some very good players every year," he says. The advantages to his club, Slinfold Park, in West Sussex, have been tangible. "From an advertising point of view, it has been of massive benefit."

While the watchword of the Lombard event is its friendliness, the competition remains intense. The attention to detail of one of the professionals, Graham Bradley, of Blankney Golf Club, near Lincoln, is such that he will join the party from Valderrama, where he has been garnering knowledge that may be of use to him and his partner, Tony Rollitt, in the days ahead.

Macdonald, the joint-managing director of Target Cleaning plc — "once a month the PGA ask us to clean the trophies but not the Ryder Cup, that is locked away" — has been grooving his swing under the watchful eye of his professional. The nerves will come, he is in no doubt, under the glare of the cameras, but he believes that they have a chance of victory in Drayton Park's centenary year. "Mike and I are playing every morning this week," Macdonald said. "Mike will club me and read the greens and as he has played San Lorenzo a few times, that will help."

Some time after 3pm on Monday, Stewart Legg will say a few words and present the winners with the Lombard Top Club Trophy. Macdonald and his fellow competitors are hoping that, at San Lorenzo, the most polished performance will have been theirs.



Legg, left, and Jones seal the future of the trophy until the year 2000

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Lombard
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Glittering gem of the Algarve

San Lorenzo
allows little
margin for error,
Mel Webb says

San Lorenzo is truly the jewel in the magnificent diara of exceptional golf courses that stud the Algarve coastline. It has been in existence for less than ten years, yet in that time it has achieved a place in a list of the top 100 golf courses in the world, and is ranked second in Europe.

The competitors in the Lombard event will be tested by this lay-out, designed by Joseph Lee, the leading American architect, and opened in 1988. There is not a hole that can be taken for granted: it is a thinker's course, one that needs sharp skills to negotiate the 6,824 yards it measures from the championship tees.

Most of the course weaves its sinuous way through the pine woods that are the feature of nearly all of the Algarve's golfing terrain. It also opens up in places to reveal awesome views of the ocean and the distant mountains.

A large part of the course is almost an extension of the beautiful estuary of the Ria Formosa, with fairways running alongside saltwater marshes and freshwater lagoons. The protected environment is the home for more than 70 species of birds. There can be few more spectacular places to play the Royal and Ancient game than here.

The course wastes no time in laying out its credentials. The first hole is 540 yards long, a right-to-left dogleg par-five which has bunkers on the elbow to catch the wayward tee-shot. The drive having been negotiated, the second shot weaves its way up a gently uphill valley which then bears right for the approach to the tiered green.

Taken in isolation it is demanding enough. But compared with what is to come, it is relatively undemanding, and therefore serves its purpose of instilling a false sense of security.

From there things get tougher. The 6th, one of the signature holes of the course, is both demanding and dramatic, an elevated tee looking down to the fairway with the estuary, sand dunes and ocean beyond. It is absolutely vital here to hit the fairway. There is no for-



The beauty of San Lorenzo is a powerful incentive to players battling through early rounds

giveness on the left or right and water awaits the over-ambitious drive.

The 8th, a magnificent par-five of 575 yards, turns inland, bordering one of the inland lakes, which snake into the fairway to define the second and third shots. The length of the second shot will decide how much of the lagoon has to be taken on for the third.

You will not walk a pace around San Lorenzo without being made to think, to concentrate on the next shot. There is nowhere to bale out of trouble, nowhere where it is possible to take the timid line. What you see here is what you get, and it is trouble — albeit trouble surrounded by beauty — from first shot to last.

**Lombard Top Club Trophy
Grand Final 3-7 October 1997**

San Lorenzo, Portugal

Lombard acknowledges with thanks
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PEUGEOT

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Which club will strike the ball most accurately?

Diamond cutters, plumbers, computer programmers and managers ... Christopher Irvine assesses the 32 finalists

CLACKON

Professional: Stuart Levermore, 47.
Amateur: Paul Atkinson, 33, bricklayer, 18 handicap.

Atkinson has the highest handicap of the grand final amateur qualifiers, but this did not prevent himself and Levermore, club professional for 17 years, from winning their regional final at Enfield. "It's fantastic to reach the final. Stuart and I just clicked," Atkinson, whose non-golfing passion is motorbikes, said.

SEADALE

Professional: John Dignam, 30.
Amateur: Leo Russell, 54, diamond cutter, 12 handicap.

Irish hopes are carried by this combination, who survived a strong field at County Louth. Russell is the oldest competitor in the field — his golfing life began at 40. "We're going out to win," he said. Dignam added: "We did well to qualify when only one team from Ireland goes through. The club's behind us and the captain is hoping to cheer us on."

CHIPPING WORTON

Professional: Derek Craik Jnr, 27.
Amateur: Danny Hicks, 25, leisure manager, 5 handicap.

Last-gasp victors at King's Norton. Craik, a former Scotland international, and Hicks, who shares the joint lowest handicap of the amateurs, form a powerful combination. In the regional final, Hicks held a 50ft putt to win the penultimate game. He took up the sport nine years ago. Craik has the advantage of having played the San Lorenzo course.

DRAYTON PARK

Professional: Mike Passmore, 46.
Amateur: Doug Macdonald, 46, managing director, 13 handicap.

Macdonald has already had his hands on the Lombard Top Club Trophy. His firm are contract cleaners for the PGA at The Belfry. The regional final win at Beau Desert was his first. "This is a chance of a lifetime," he said. Passmore has been club professional for 24 years and is another man familiar with the Portuguese course.



The Lombard Trophy and the pair who won it last year, Ged Furey and Geoff Wilson, from the Pleasington club

Professional: Marcus Groombridge, 26.
Amateur: Neil Jones, 41, company director, 11 handicap.

Groombridge, former England schoolboy international and member of the Mastercard Tour for two seasons, finished 12th in last year's grand final, and with a new partner in Jones, who has only been playing golf for six years, is hoping to finish higher. The pair booked their final ticket with a six-under par 66 at Chertsey Park.

Professional: Chris DeBruin, 46.
Amateur: John Hartle, 44, general manager, 17 handicap.

Hartle, the amateur partner of the Basingstoke duo, has an international sporting pedigree. He

represented Singapore at rugby union and cricket and came to golf late at 39. DeBruin has been club professional for 23 years and appeared on the Tour in the Seventies. He played in a pro-am at San Lorenzo in February. "If John and I can link as we did in the regional final at Test Valley, we've a good chance," he said.

Professional: David Sheppard, 38.
Amateur: Lee Scott, 29, car sales executive, 17 handicap.

"We're going feeling confident and looking for at least a top three place," Sheppard, a member of the European Tour in the Eighties, said. "I'll be under-par at Exeter, the pair carded the best score of all the grand finalists. Scott gave the game up after winning a junior event but has come back strongly and still plays with the irons given to him as a boy."

- 1 Whitecraigs**
Professional: Alastair Forrow.
Amateur: Iain Davidson.
- 2 Uphall**
Professional: Gordon Law.
Amateur: Tom Mathieson.
- 3 Whitley Bay**
Professional: Gary Donnison.
Amateur: Andrew Lucan.
- 4 Leigh**
Professional: Andrew Baguley.
Amateur: Geoff Anderson.
- 5 Prestwich**
Professional: Simon Wakefield.
Amateur: Peter Solski.
- 6 Blankney**
Professional: Graham Bradley.
Amateur: Tony Rollitt.
- 7 Slade Valley**
Professional: John Dignam.
Amateur: Leo Russell.
- 8 Drayton Park**
Professional: Mike Passmore.
Amateur: Doug Macdonald.

THE FINALISTS AND THE CLUBS THEY REPRESENT AT SAN LORENZO



- 9 Burghill Valley**
Professional: Nigel Clarke.
Amateur: Paul Moses.
- 10 Weston Park**
Professional: Michael Few.
Amateur: Rod Main.
- 11 Chipping Norton**
Professional: Derek Craik Jr.
Amateur: Danny Hicks.
- 12 Clacton-on-Sea**
Professional: Stuart Levermore.
Amateur: Paul Atkinson.
- 13 Tynney Park**
Professional: Chris DeBruin.
Amateur: John Hartle.
- 14 Worldham Park**
Professional: John Le Roux.
Amateur: Peter Skidmore.
- 15 Sunfold Park**
Professional: Marcus Groombridge.
Amateur: Neil Jones.
- 16 Tiverton**
Professional: David Sheppard.
Amateur: Lee Scott.



BLANKNEY

Professional: Graham Bradley, 42.
Amateur: Tony Rollitt, 44, plumber, 12 handicap.

Bradley has travelled to San Lorenzo direct from Valderrama and is hoping that something of Europe's Ryder Cup triumph will have rubbed off. He is an experienced pro-am campaigner and Rollitt put his performance in the regional final at Keddystone Park down to the refinements to his swing by Bradley.

WHITLEY BAY

Professional: Gary Donnison, 22.
Amateur: Andrew Lucan, 33, computer programmer, 8 handicap.

The pair won on the testing Pannal course near Harrogate by

one shot and had Donnison's birdie on the last hole to thank for a six-under par 66. With Lucan's reasonable handicap and Donnison's experience as a former England schoolboy international, albeit that he is the youngest competitor in the grand final, the pair are capable of performing well.

WORLDHAM PARK

Professional: Jon Le Roux, 25.
Amateur: Peter Skidmore, 29, club steward, 8 handicap.

The South African-born Le Roux was the 1996 Hampshire (PGA) matchplay champion. That and the fact that he has played the San Lorenzo course should stand them in good stead. Skidmore only took the game up three years ago because he was picking up too many injuries in rugby union.

UPHALL

Professional: Gordon Law, 32.
Amateur: Tom Mathieson, 35, machine setter, 11 handicap.

The West Lothian pair were among the most impressive of all the regional final victors. Despite driving rain at Longniddry in June, they roared home on the inward nine to record a 64. Little wonder then that Law is confident they can do well in Portugal, come rain or shine.

WHITCRAIGS

Professional: Alastair Forrow, 29.
Amateur: Iain Davidson, 31, project manager, 5 handicap.

Forrow has already won one prize already this year — a car for a hole in one — and has his sights set on the Peugeot 106 for the player at San Lorenzo who manages the feat at the short fifth. In Davidson, he has an in-form partner, who shares the best handicap of the amateurs. They qualified at Buchanan Castle.

BURGHILL VALLEY

Professional: Nigel Clarke, 33.
Amateur: Paul Moses, 28, company team leader, 6 handicap.

Clarke, club professional for two years, enjoyed his first tournament win in the regional final, in harness with Moses, who is making his first trip abroad for the grand final. As well as a passport, he must remember to clean his clubs. The last time he used them was in the regional final victory at Puckrup Hall.

WESTON PARK

Professional: Michael Few, 33.

Amateur: Rod Main, 31, senior analyst, 6 handicap.

Few was a European Tour player for three years and has represented England and Great Britain. He has experience of Portugal having played once in the Portuguese Open. Main is club chairman and boasts having played 108 holes in a day. Their regional final success came at King's Lynn.

PRESTWICH

Professional: Simon Wakefield, 32.
Amateur: Peter Solski, 42, hotel golf course manager, 13 handicap.

In a tight finish to the regional final at Northrop, Wakefield and Solski defied driving rain and a pair of pairs on 68 to complete a winning 67, five under par. In his profession Solski gets the opportunity to practise and he has managed a few more hours than usual.

LEIGH

Professional: Andrew Baguley, 33.
Amateur: Geoff Anderson, 51, gas fitter, 10 handicap.

Baguley, eight years the professional at Leigh, represented Great Britain in the 1994 PGA Cup in Florida. The pair's experience saw them triumph in the regional final at Hesketh and Anderson is glad simply to have reached the climax to the competition in Portugal. "It helps playing with a perfectionist like Andrew," he said.

● A report of the final will be published in The Times on Tuesday.
● Keep up to date with the final by calling the freephone number 0800 801 429.

In sport Lombard has developed a broad sponsorship portfolio, from junior cricket to golf to rowing. John Goodbody reports

Pulling together and making a splash in sport

Lombard has a long and distinguished record in sponsorship. It has stretched across 24 years and several sports and has developed and assisted both elite performers and grassroots activities.

As Stewart Legg, the group chief executive, says: "We don't just pay and walk away. As an active participant in sports sponsorship for many years, we have a real appreciation of what it takes to make sponsorship work and we use that knowledge to target our promotional resources for maximum impact."

Since Lombard is the United Kingdom's foremost supplier of motor finance, rallying was a natural choice when the group first started sponsorship in 1974, linking up with the RAC. The Lombard RAC Rally established itself as highly professional, dramatically increasing public awareness and enjoyment of the sport, and setting the standard for other international events.

By 1992, Lombard decided to withdraw from rally sponsorship because it wanted to promote the name and image of Lombard to a wider business audience. The group's activities had expanded extensively with Lombard also becoming the leading supplier of asset finance in the United Kingdom, providing contract hire and leasing facilities for everything from mainframes to medical equipment and trucks to tractors. Golf was the platform that Lombard was seeking. The sport, which attracts a large number of business people, provides an ideal way to put Lombard's name before a wide variety of enterprises.



Two sporting chances: Pakistan batsman Hassan Raza in the Lombard World Challenge final at Lord's, and Britain's coxless four row their way to victory in the world championships

way of contributing to amateur golfers' enjoyment of the sport was to create a high quality, pro-am event in which any club member could participate.

In 1995, the first year of the tournament, Lombard set itself an entry target of 650 clubs, regarded as wildly over-optimistic by some commentators. In fact, by ensuring that the tournament was packaged as a leading event, from initial club mailings to the management of the five-day Grand final at the luxurious San Lorenzo Golf Club, Lombard attracted 850 entries in 1995, rising to 1,000 clubs in 1996 and more than 1,100 in 1997. Within three years, the Lombard Top Club Trophy has become the largest event of its type in Europe and is billed as the premier pro-am in the calendar of the Professional Golfers' Association.



Matthew Pinsent, whose Olympic gold medal rowing successes blended naturally with Lombard's "No 1 brand image".

Redgrave said: "Without Lombard's support, I wouldn't be going for my fifth successive gold medal at the Sydney 2000 Olympics." The sponsorship has extended to the pair's new rowing partners, Tim Foster and James Cracknell. The unbeaten duo of Redgrave and Pinsent have demonstrated this year that they are just as successful in a four as they were in a coxless

pair, taking the world title last month. The Lombard name has been prominent in coverage at the World Cup and world championships.

fact that Lombard's community investment programme as host, the Lombard World Challenge was a huge success, with more than 10,000 people watching the final at Lord's between India and Pakistan. Lombard received the Institute of Sports Sponsorship award for the best new sponsorship for 1996.

PATRICK EAGAR

MIKE HEWITT/ALLSPORT

BOXING: CRITICAL AUDIENCE DEMANDS STYLISH PERFORMANCE FROM WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

Lewis prepares to press for respect

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT, IN ATLANTIC CITY

ANDREW GOLOTA is a man to be avoided by those faint-hearted heavyweights who take up a career in the division simply to cash in on one big challenge for a world title. He is strong, technically capable and has a volatile temperament — yet he is the best thing that has happened to Lennox Lewis.

Certainly, a contest with the Pole makes good commercial sense for the World Boxing Council (WBC) champion. After Golota was disqualified twice in contests with Riddick Bowe, the former champion from the United States and once Lewis's greatest rival, there is public demand to see how he will fare against the Briton. As a result, Lewis stands to make a lot of money — around \$10 million — from the bout being broadcast on pay-per-view television. Frank Maloney, his manager, said: "If he can get 400,000 buys, it's a home run." The show is expected to pull in 700,000 paying home customers in the United States at \$40 a time.

Yet Lewis, perhaps because of his distinguished amateur career, is more interested in titles than money. He wants to be recognised as the best heavyweight in the world, although to earn such accolades could prove more difficult than becoming the undisputed world heavyweight champion. If Lewis defeats Golota, he will still have to convince the American press of his abilities, a critical group that, having known the golden age of Muhammad Ali, is hard to please. Only Larry Holmes has come up to its standards.

British heavyweights have always been considered a joke, horizontal champions, by American boxing writers. They do not remember the heroic efforts of Tommy Farr, only the pathetic attempts of Brian London and Richard

Dunn against Ali. Indeed, in a reappraisal of the heavy-weight scene that followed the suspension of Mike Tyson after he bit Evander Holyfield earlier this year, the *Los Angeles Times* did not even name Lewis as a contender.

Meeting a high profile heavyweight like Golota has given Lewis a chance to make the Americans take a proper look at him. If he gives a worthy performance, he could one day become the first British heavyweight to gain recognition as the genuine article on this side of the Atlantic.

The view of Jon Saraceno, of *USA Today*, shows what a difficult task Lewis has before him. Saraceno said: "Lewis is the heavyweight champion of hesitancy. In the ring, only Michael Moore exceeds his leanness for combat. Truth is, Lewis didn't care for a long time. No determination, no commitment. He preferred partying in his native Jamaica to pushing himself. He changed trainers the way Mike Tyson changes Gucci loafers. He found Emanuel Steward [his trainer], but is it too late?"

Maloney remains pessimistic about Lewis's chances of

convincing the Americans. Steward is convinced that if Lewis looks good against Golota, the American public will warm to him. "The American public needs a fight against a creditable fighter," Steward said. "Golota is such a fighter. Lennox has the talent to take British boxing to a level beyond where it has ever been. He fights to the level of his competition and Golota is the man to bring the best out of him."

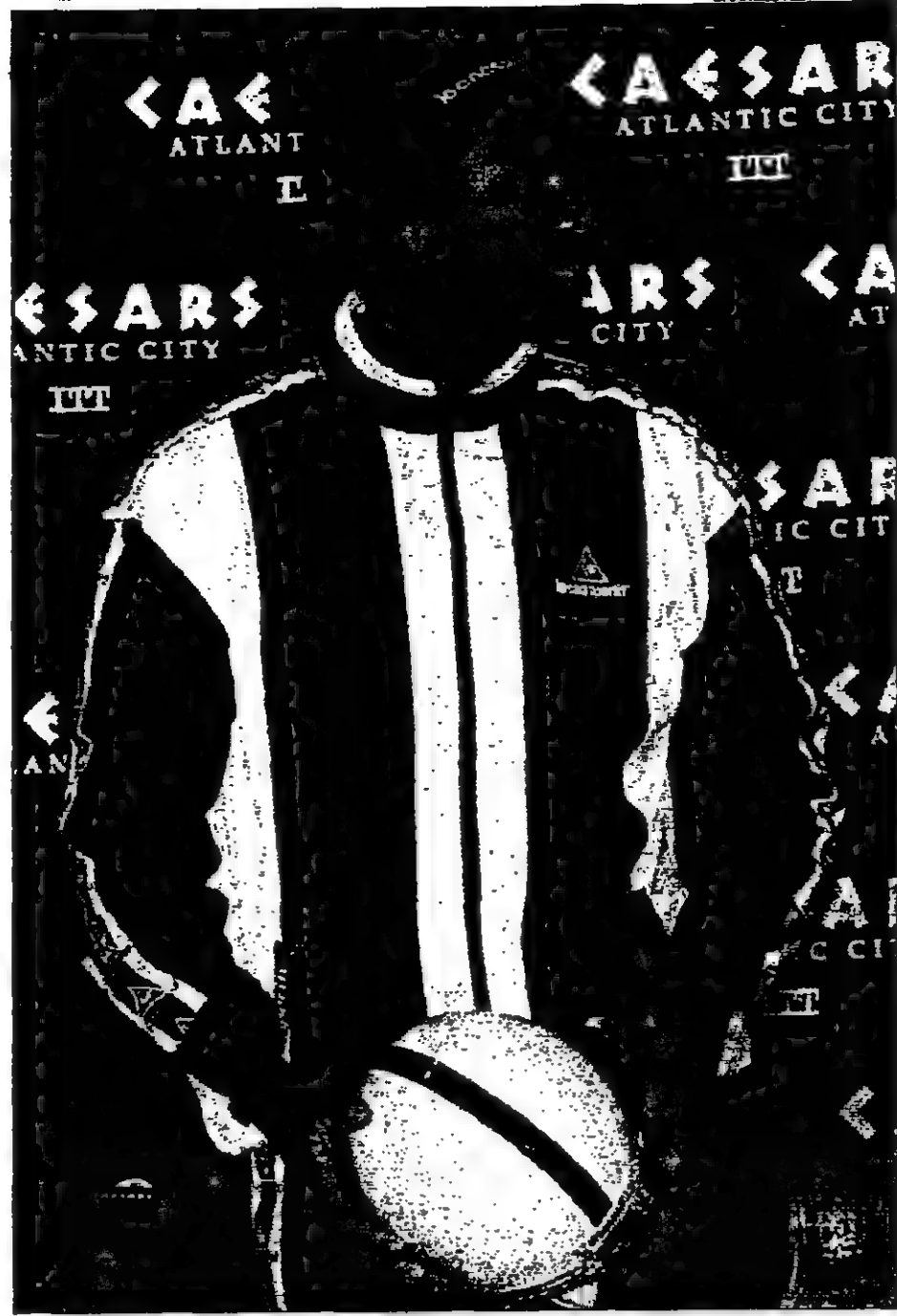
If Lennox ever comes out and gets being analytical — I don't like him playing these chess games — there's no heavyweight in the world to stop him. The American public likes bad guys. Golota is a bad guy and so this is Lewis's chance to prove himself to the Americans.

Dino Duva, the head of Main Events, which promotes Lewis in the United States, said that Lewis had made some mistakes in his behaviour towards the American press and had given them the impression that he was arrogant and aloof, but he believed that this fault had been brought home to Lewis by Steward and he expects things to look brighter for the champion.

Also, Lennox has been hurt by the fights he has had to fight, he said. "Court fights, mandatory fights after mandatory fights, vacant title fights and it's all taken a year and a half to get out of the way. All this has not helped him. They were not the best fights in the world and he didn't get the coverage. Now, with this fight against Golota, he will be able to show his talents and I promise you if he looks good, it won't be long before he starts getting the respect of American boxing writers. They have been slow to show respect but things are going to get warmer."



Golota: testing



Lewis, mindful of Golota's habit of punching low, adopts extra protection yesterday

SNOOKER

Home comforts spur McManus

BY PHIL YATES

ALAN MCMANUS avenged a painful defeat by beating Peter Ebdon, the holder, 6-3 in a quarter-final of the Regal Scottish Masters at Motherwell yesterday. However, the match turned in his favour on an outrageous slice of good fortune.

Breaks of 66 and 69 gave Ebdon a 2-1 lead but McManus, bitterly disappointed after losing to him in the final of the same tournament 12 months ago, drew level at 2-2 with a break of 119 — his 90th century break in professional competition.

The fifth frame, which ultimately proved pivotal, was less clear cut. Ebdon cleared from the last red to pink, only to miss a tricky black using the rest, and two shots later a much simpler pot to a middle pocket.

McManus, as aware of the frame's potential psychological impact as his opponent, eventually fluked the black off two cushions to edge 3-2 ahead, and then, without putting together any contributions of significance, established a 5-2 advantage.

Ebdon has developed a deserved reputation for recovering from such positions, and McManus must have begun to experience a sense of concern when Ebdon duly prevented him from getting on

the scoreboard in the eighth frame. On this occasion though, Ebdon's rally proved to be brief.

Battling it out in the kind of scrappy frame in which he so often revels, McManus, without a trophy success since the Thailand Open in March 1996, won the ninth to secure a meeting with John Higgins or Ronnie O'Sullivan in the semi-finals tomorrow.

McManus, who lives only a leisurely 20-minute drive from the venue, said: "I have not played well for some time, but being in your own backyard really helps."

"I am also comfortable in this sort of environment because I like playing the game's better players. I have never been frightened of them."

The Team Gdeez Capital Management Stable, headed by Ian Doyle, the manager of Stephen Hendry, the world No.1, welcomed a new addition to their line-up yesterday when Anthony Hamilton, the world No.14, from Nottingham, signed a three-year contract.

Doyle, who also signed O'Sullivan during the close season, now manages 17 professionals, including Ken Doherty, the world champion, and nine members of the game's elite top 16.

RUGBY UNION

England's busy diary gives Brittle cause for concern

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE Rugby Football Union (RFU) will press for a reduction in the number of international matches played in the pre-Christmas period next season. The RFU, worried that supporters will find the commitments this season indigestible, will propose to northern-hemisphere colleagues a diet of three matches at most.

Cliff Brittle, the RFU management board chairman, arrived at a Twickenham briefing yesterday on the heels of a technical exposition that showed players going over the top illegally in loose play.

Brittle promptly agreed that his predecessors in office had also gone over the top by arranging four international matches on consecutive Saturdays in November-December. England play New Zealand twice, Australia and South Africa in that period and Brittle said: "I think it is too much, for the players, for the clubs and for the whole game. We are receiving complaints from all sections of the game and we are talking to other unions to try to bring some consistency over international."

"I would like to arrange with other northern-hemisphere unions a window of five weekends before Christmas, during which each union agreed to play no more than three matches." As things

stand, France play five international matches this autumn (including three in eight days during the Latin Cup), England four, Ireland three and Wales and Scotland two.

Roger Utley, the England team manager, agreed that the existing schedule "errs on the side of overkill", though he and Clive Woodward, the coach, seek to expose England's leading players to regular examinations by teams from the southern hemisphere. "We need to challenge them on a regular basis if we are going to improve and challenge for the top prize — the World Cup," Utley said.

The RFU is close to agreements over sponsorship of

their five nations' championship matches and the game with New Zealand at Old Trafford on November 22, but they were able to confirm that the knockout competition, the second round of which is tomorrow, will be supported for the next four years by Carlsberg-Tedley. The brewing company is understood to be putting some £7 million into rugby, including not only the senior and junior cup competitions but the county championship at senior and under-21 levels.

Filkington, the glass company, withdrew from a three-year agreement worth £1.1 million during the summer; it had sponsored the cup from 1983 but opted out after only one season of the latest agreement. The competition will now be known as the Tetley's Bitter Cup, with a prize fund in excess of £750,000 this season, which will be increased during the next four years to more than £1 million. The cup winners will get £50,000, the losers £35,000.

Tony Rees, the Cardiff lock, has lost his appeal against a 90-day suspension imposed by European Rugby Cup Ltd after he was found to have stamped on Gareth Llewellyn, the Harlequins forward, during the Heineken Cup match last month.



Rees: lost appeal

IN BRIEF

Ijaz proves Pakistan's inspiration

AN unbeaten innings of 139 by Ijaz Ahmed inspired Pakistan to a nine-wicket victory against India in the third and final one-day international in Lahore yesterday, securing the series 2-1.

India were all out for 216 in 49.2 overs. Pakistan, with Ijaz opening the batting, reached the target in only 26.2 overs for the loss of one wicket in the only day-night encounter of the series. It was the first series between the traditional rivals to be played in Pakistan for eight years.

FOOTBALL: The parent company of Queens Park Rangers and Waspas rugby union club has confirmed that it is investigating a move to a new site along the M4 corridor as well as the possibility of expanding Loftus Road, the club's present ground.

GOLF: Toni Wiesner, a left-hander from Texas, won the British senior ladies' open championship at the first attempt at Frilford Heath yesterday after leading from the start. A 54-hole total of 231 gave Wiesner a five-stroke victory over Valerie Hassett, the defending champion.

FOOTBALL: Anthony Bird, ten, from Doncaster, has been given a five-month suspended ban by the Football Association after being sent off for swearing and hitting out in an under-11 match.

HOCKEY

Foreign influx adds spice to domestic scene

BY SYDNEY FRISKIN

AFTER the excitement of the Junior World Cup at Milton Keynes, where England's under-21 team finished fourth, the focus of attention switches to the start of the National League season on Sunday.

At the end of the campaign in May, 16 players will be on their way to Utrecht, in Holland, for the World Cup, an event in which England finished fourth in Sydney in 1994. Training commitments for the World Cup will place an added strain on the players, but to ease the pressure, the premier and first division clubs will not join the Hockey Association Cup until the fourth round.

The influx of foreign players, notably from South Africa and Canada, has added extra flavour to the league. Greg Nicol, South Africa's centre forward, who, with Bram Loumans, of Holland, was joint top scorer with seven goals at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, has joined Surbiton.

The Surrey club are eager to regain their place in the premier division after being relegated, along with Havant, last season.

Craig O'Hagan and Gregor Maier, two other South Africans, have joined Southgate Reading, the premier division champions, who have recruited the Canadian, Mark Bartholomew, from British Columbia, and in midweek their ranks were swelled by Ranjeet Doel, another Canadian.

Old Loughtonians, who have lost Julian Halls to the Dutch club HDM, have two foreign reinforcements, Brian Myburgh, the South African goalkeeper, and Scott Smith, of Canada. Mike Cullen, of South Africa, returns to the first division club, Chelmsford, for another season, and is joined by three of his compatriots, Justin King, a deep defender, David Stanforth, an under-21 goalkeeper, and Michael Carr, a skilful mid-field player.

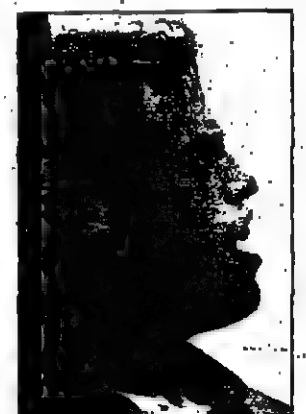
On the home front, David Mathews, who distinguished himself at the Ju-

nior World Cup as a short-corn specialist, has moved from Guildford to Canterbury, who also have Sean Kerly, the former Great Britain centre-forward, on their playing list. Alistair Boyse, another prominent forward from the England Under-21 team, has left East Grinstead to join Lewes in the First Division.

Brett Garrard, who was captain of the England team at Milton Keynes, has left Guildford, but at present is listed as unattached.

Reading will travel on Sunday to Doncaster, who earned promotion to the premier division, along with Beeston. Alan Stoves, the Doncaster player-coach, knows that the game represents a daunting baptism for his side, but said: "If you are going to test yourself, you might as well do so against the best."

However, Doncaster may be relieved to learn that they



Pearn: deserved rest

will not have to contend with Mark Pearn, the England Under-21 centre forward. He and Manpreet Kochhar, another member of the England junior team, have been given a well-earned rest after being in training since the end of last season.

The senior England internationals, Simon Mason, in goal, and Jon Wyatt, are making the trip to Doncaster, but Reading will also be without Mark Hoskin, who has gone abroad, and his brother Howard, who has not recovered from injury.

Hightown driven by Carr's U-turn

LINDA CARR'S retirement lasted 132 days. Given a stirring send-off after Hightown's cup final triumph at Milton Keynes in May, the former England and Great Britain captain will return to action tomorrow after being included in the Hightown team to play Ipswich (Cathy Harris writes).

"I never thought I'd miss it," said Carr, 41, who made more than 100 international appearances. "But I watched the season's opening match and it was really difficult standing on the sideline."

Tina Cullen, the captain, said that although Carr may not start the match, her presence in the young Hightown squad is invaluable. "Age is completely irrelevant," Cullen, the league's all-time leading goalscorer, said.

"She's still a superb player

and gives the side stability. It's ironic that I'd only just finished getting everyone to sign her retirement card, so we presented it to her at training on Wednesday."

Annalisa Bishop, Maria Hardiman, Kate Hendrick, Josie Kelsa, Nicky O'Donnell and Kate Walsh, all schoolgirl internationals, are competing for places alongside Hightown's prominent England internationals, Cullen and the in-form goalkeeper, Carolyn Reid.

Ipswich, who trail the champions, Slough, on goal difference at the top of the table, recorded their best result last season when they won the corresponding fixture 6-1. Missing two key players, Sarah Bamfield and Debbie Rawlinson, who are unavailable for business reasons, they may struggle to repeat that scoreline.

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RACING: SHEIKH HAMDAN PROFITS AS MORLEY PRODUCES NOTABLE DOUBLE AT NEWMARKET

Hayil helped by blinkered outlook

By CHRIS McGRATH and RICHARD EVANS

YOU need to be a fairly single-minded sort to have the final say in a bidding duel at 50,000 guineas, which is how Hamdan al-Maktoum secured a Disis filly at the Houghton Sales in Newmarket on Wednesday evening.

Up the road on the Rowley Mile yesterday, it did not take long for the sheikh to profit from a similarly blinkered approach.

Hayil, whose victory in the Thoroughbred Corporation Middle Park Stakes helped defray the mind-boggling expenses of one of the sale's biggest spenders, was transformed by a pair of blinkers. It was precisely the same ruse that had enabled Far, likewise trained by David Morley for Sheikh Hamdan, to win the 1994 running of a race that sometimes seems to cling to group one status by its fingertips.

The recent roll of honour does include Royal Applause, who competes for the sprint championship in the Prix de l'Abbaye at Chantilly on Sunday, and Rodrigo de Triano. But yesterday's field had won just eight of their 26 races, three of them remaining maidens, and — while the sheikh feels that his Davyrol might stay an easy mile next year — the best that can be hoped is that the blinkers keep Hayil suitably combustible in sprints.



The blinkered Hayil holds the challenge of Carrowick, right, in the Middle Park Stakes at Newmarket yesterday

Yesterday they enabled him to take it up two out and hold the late challenge of Carrowick by three-quarters of a length. "He is tough little horse, 100 per cent genuine," Morley said. "But he sometimes doesn't concentrate, like a young girl staring out the window during her school lessons. We tried the blinkers

at home, but he wasn't electrified by anything — he's not the type to over-exert himself." The same should presumably be true of Morley's 38, who has weathered three heart operations. He said: "I'm just wonderful to be able to train nice horses like this, it keeps you going."

Barry Hills reckoned

Carrowick would have won on easier ground, but Arkadian Hero, sent off at odds-on, could not muster a challenge in fourth — prompting Luca Cumani to conclude that he had not recovered from a hard race at Newbury 12 days earlier.

Morley ensured that his patron's attention did not

wander either as he ponders the destination of his new yearlings, by teasing up Hayil's win with a listed-race stakes for Inishab in the Heath Court Hotel Jock Stakes. Inishab, completing a brace, was in taking style, but his task was simplified by the favourite, Bin Rosie, refusing to knuckle down on the

ground and finishing stone last.

Meanwhile, a radical shake-up in betting practices at racecourses looks set to be imposed on bookmakers after protracted negotiations ended at reaching an agreement broke down irrevocably yesterday.

The Racecourse Association (RCA), which has been increasingly frustrated by the outdated practices of on-course bookmakers, yesterday terminated negotiations with the National Association of Bookmakers (NAB) and asked the Levy Board "to use its powers to secure the introduction of a new administrative structure for racecourse pitches".

The talks, aimed at modernising the way bookmakers operate on course, began in 1990 and included proposals for computerised betting receipts for punters and allowing bookmakers into members' enclosures.

Angus Crichton-Miller, chairman of the RCA, said yesterday: "There comes a point at which protracted discussions have to stop. I set a deadline in early September for the resolution of the outstanding issues between the RCA and NAB, but we are still at odds over some fairly major issues. We will give every help to the Levy Board to bring a modern, customer-friendly system to our racecourse betting rings as soon as is practicable."

LINGFIELD

THUNDERER
1.55 Breeze: 2.55 Means Business, 2.55 Jila, 3.30 Coolin River, 4.00 Bold Tina, 4.35 Spartan Heartbeat, 5.10 Gold-Blade.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 2.55 JILA (nsp).

GOING: FIRM DRAW: 5F-7F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST SIS

1.55 EBF BLIND MAIDEN STAKES

(2-Y-O; £3,550; 5f) (6 runners)
1 (1) 88 ROYAL INTERVIEW 10 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
2 (2) 88 SACCHETTI 21 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
3 (3) 88 MESSIAH 21 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
4 (4) 88 MESSIAH 21 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
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3.30 CHAMPAGNE JACQUART NURSERY

HANDICAP (2-Y-O; £3,748; 7f) (16)
1 (1) 88 ROYAL INTERVIEW 10 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
2 (2) 88 SACCHETTI 21 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
3 (3) 88 MESSIAH 21 M Common 5-9-0 J. Gosselin 10-1
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Julian Muscat tracks the greyhound chasing a treble chance Some Picture in the frame for glory

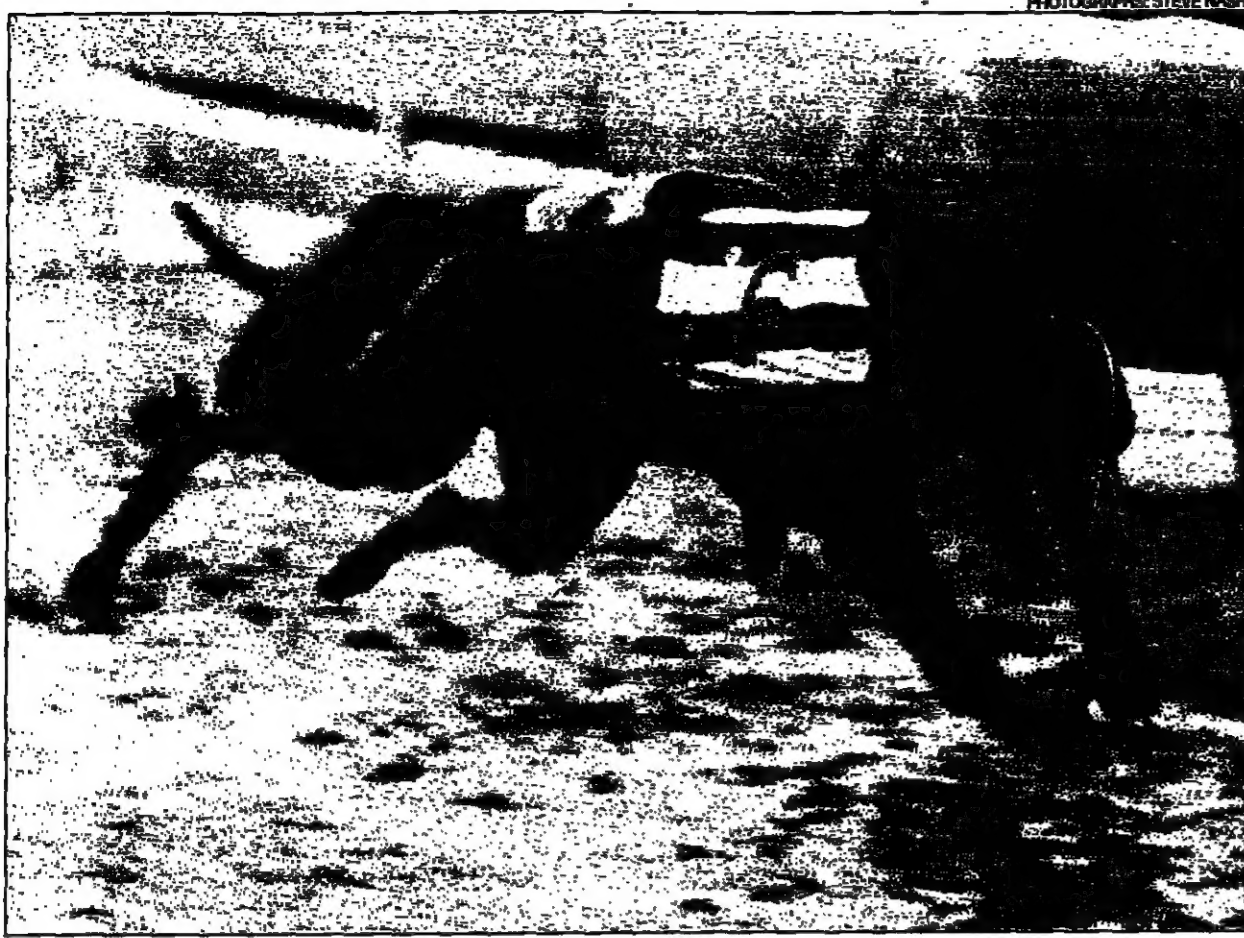
In the smoke-filled bowels of Britain's dilapidated greyhound stadiums, they will congregate in their thousands for a televised transmission. Those farther afield will tune in to their radios. Even the Pope could not pack them in any tighter at Shelbourne Park, Dublin, tomorrow night, when Some Picture, hailed as the first million-pound greyhound, departs from trap five on a frantic dash towards history.

Having negotiated 15 eliminators and seven kilometres in sustaining the dream, just 490 metres now stand between Some Picture and the canine Triple Crown. The greyhound community has been expectant for months. Some have even draped it in the cloak of a religious cult. Never before has any dog bounded to victory in the Scottish, English and Irish Derbies. It is little wonder that Some Picture has been hailed as a messiah in an ailing sport.

Of course, tales of four-legged creatures in search of the holy grail have become commonplace. In horse racing, Silver Charm, having won the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes, came up inches short in the Belmont Stakes, the concluding leg of the North American Triple Crown. On the same day in June *Entrepreneur*, a 2,000 Guinness winner and a candidate for the British Triple Crown, was brutally exposed in the Derby at Epsom. Yet Some Picture's assault on the greyhound summit equates to the scaling of Everest's blackest face.

Consider, for instance, the dismissive riposte from William Hills when representatives of Imperial Tobacco, initiators of the £100,000 Triple Crown bonus, approached the bookmaking giant to "insure" their liability. Odds of 100-1, duly taken by Imperial Tobacco, implied that the concept was fantasy.

Consider, also, the fact that winning the English Derby often heralds a greyhound's immediate retirement. Pursuing the Irish equivalent has proved so elusive that to even attempt it was considered pure folly. Then there was the kennel sickness Some Picture contracted on his arrival in Ireland. The hosts winked knowingly, muttering openly about excuses being contrived in advance.



Some Picture's dash towards the Triple Crown has rekindled interest in a sport seemingly on the wane

Yet the evidence was quickly before them: Some Picture progressed through the qualifiers, despite his physical frailty. Now, with a week's rest under his girth, he is reported to be fighting fit for the biggest night in 70 years of licensed greyhound racing.

Win or lose, experts maintain that Some Picture has already usurped the legends who surface regularly in pub

quizzes. Names like Mick The Miller, who, in a White City stadium attracting football-sized crowds in the 1930s, carried off successive Derbies before fighting dogs on the track rendered his third victory null and void. Or Scourge Champ, who would tail himself off before summoning panther-like strides to snare his opponents. Or Ballyregan Bob, whose record

winning sequence of 32, gained in the *Racing Post* World Challenge, was broadcast live on the BBC's *Nine O'Clock News* in 1986.

All of this remains idle detail to Charlie Lister, who trains Some Picture in Nottingham. Lister is the antidote to decades of Ireland's self-declared superiority in handling greyhounds. Some still question his credentials, reluctant to accord him parity with their country's finest. Although Lister will not be drawn on the Anglo-Irish issue, the British cognoscenti insist that this quiet, intense individual can mix it with the best.

He will certainly have to tomorrow, when a capacity 7,500 crowd — the all-time event could have been sold many times over — will be paying for their own. However, Lister, 58, remains disconnected from the hype because his dogs are his children. In clipped, awkward sentences, he acknowledges the historical context, the

£100,000 bonus, the powerful spotlight on the sport he adores — but only to highlight the plight of kennel hands: "The most underpaid people in any sport."

The words flow only when Lister, formerly a timber merchant, talks about Some Picture in the human terms of the layman. "This dog is so friendly and kind, it's unbelievable. He'll put his paw out for you and everything, always pleased to see you, and well behaved. Really, he is just like a child." This hardly squares with the layman's image of the greyhound, all wire-muzzled, teeth bared, growling, barking, occasionally snapping at opponents along the way.

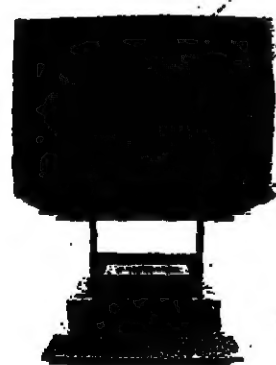
The paradox applies equally to Some Picture's value. Greyhound racing is perceived as a seedy sport, so it is hard to believe that from the sandpits of Walthamstow, and Wimbledon can rise animals worth seven-figure sums. Victory tomorrow would take Some Picture's earnings close to £250,000. Win or lose, it will be his last race before he embarks on stud duties that could earn his owner, Steve Spiller, more than £100,000 a year.

The portents for that elusive Triple Crown are encouraging. Some Picture is free of the gruelling qualifying rounds of the Irish Derby. "I don't normally get carried away but this whole thing is a bit special," Lister said. "I'll probably feel it most when I put him into his trap. Even if he wins, I'll be upset to see the last of him." The only person not sharing that sentiment will be the William Hills representative who laid those 100-1 odds. The look on his face would make some picture.



Lister with Some Picture, "he is just like a child"

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Answers from page 45

PAPAUMU
(b) A small evergreen tree or shrub, *Griselinia littoralis*, belonging to the family Compositae, native to New Zealand, and distinguished by thick, ovate leaves with shiny upper surfaces. The Maori word, "Broadleaf papauma (*Griselinia littoralis*)" is a common hard-wood tree throughout the mixed and beech forests.

SAILAB
(a) A method of cultivation used in the Ladakhs in Pakistan and northern India in which the land is irrigated by flood-water from the rivers. From the Hindi and Punjabi for a flood or a current the Persians still flowing + of water. "The total area in the Ladakhs, along different rivers, cultivated annually after inundation or sailab, was about 2.17 million acres. This cultivation was referred to as sailab."

PROPOSITA
(b) A female propositus, an individual who was the first member of a family to come to the notice of a researcher, and through whom investigation of a pedigree began. From the feminine past participle of the Latin *proponere* to put forward. "A study of 12 different blood group systems in the propositus and her parents failed to exclude paternity."

ROSHI
(b) The spiritual leader of a community of Zen Buddhist monks. Transliteration of the Japanese word. "She's son of like an elderly Zen priest, an old roshi who after years of work and study has distilled a large burden of 'knowledge' into a single gem of wisdom which he renders in a single haiku."

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Eclair's funny side of life

Jenny Eclair Sings
Channel 5, 8.00pm

As this show, for reasons of topicality, is being recorded close to transmission no preview tapes were available. But the choice of host should give a good idea of what to expect. Jenny Eclair, winner of the Ferrier Award at Edinburgh in 1995, is one of the least inhibited of the current breed of female comics and normally let loose on the viewing public only well after the watershed. Hence much of the interest will lie in seeing how far she has to tone down her material for family viewing. The guess is that she will not be tamed too much. The series promises guests, gossip and consumer tips and will be broadly inspired by the past week's news, hence the need to put it together at the last minute. The ingredients are less intriguing than the prospect of what Eclair will make of them.

Ground Force
BBC2, 8.30pm

The garden makeover series continues to be as much entertainment as instruction. With Alan Titchmarsh as anchor it could hardly be anything else. Perhaps the jokes do not flow quite as freely as in previous programmes but tonight's show, from a water mill in Sussex, rarely keeps a straight face for long. With the husband kept out of the way the challenge is to transform his garden in two days on a budget of £750. Gardening purists may object that the refurbishment is more about carpentry than horticulture, for the two main tasks are to build a wooden deck over the sluice and to construct a screen of willow to give privacy from the adjoining lane. But Titchmarsh manages to do a bit of planting, as well as giving us the benefit of his wisdom on matters from dealing with mole hills to choosing garden ornaments.

Dangerfield
BBC1, 9.30pm

Tony McHale is one of those seasoned television writers whose name on the credits is a guarantee of a well-worked script that juggles several plots at the same time and keeps then spinning until it is time to call a halt. His *Dangerfield* episode does not disappoint, encompassing a hostage-taking, a further instalment in the slow-burning romance of



The divine Miss Midler (BBC1, 10.20pm)

Dr Paul (Nigel Le Vaillant) and DS Helen (Nicola Capper) and light relief from the volatile Angela (Marcia Warren), a receptionist from *Dangerfield*, despite its dark moments, is a comfortable show which does not set out to give the viewer nightmares. Sandra Maitland, who as Mandy Jordache of *Brookside* killed her husband and buried him under the patio, guests as a woman whose road crash sparks the main storyline.

Parkinson: The Interviews
BBC1, 10.25pm

As star quality goes, Bette Midler may not match up to previous subjects of this series such as Bob Hope or Bing Crosby. But her 1979 confrontation with Michael Parkinson (interview is too tame a word) was a routing affair and well worth recalling as an instance of an utterly guest upstaging an increasingly rattled host. It is to Parkinson's credit that he keeps his composure as well as he does. To a large extent, of course, Midler is playing up to the outrageous image she was carefully constructing as the world's starkest talking woman. She appears in a dress cut so low that from some angles there seems almost no top to it and proceeds in her shrill and vulgar way to take over the show. Accusing Parkinson of wearing a wig is the least of it. In keeping with chat show tradition, plugs for her new (in 1979) album and film, *The Rose*, are not overlooked. Peter Waymark

Radio 3, 10.00pm

This slot in the Radio 3 schedules was given more prominence in the recent programme shuffle, especially as there is now a Saturday concert as well as one each weekday for judged office workers. Today, and for a further seven Fridays, the concert comes live from St George's Church on Brandon Hill in Bristol and each concert, titled *Double Take*, will feature a new approach to familiar works. Today the series begins with a concert by two pianists, David Nettle and Richard Markham. The classical works they are playing are by Brahms, Debussy and Ravel, but the concert also includes arrangements by Nettle and Markham of two numbers from *West Side Story*: *Tonight* and *America*.

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiley 12.30pm News 1.00pm Radio 1 1.30pm Mark Radcliffe 2.00pm News 2.30pm Radio 1 3.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00pm News 4.30pm Radio 1 5.00pm News 5.30pm Radio 1 6.00pm News 6.30pm Radio 1 7.00pm News 7.30pm Radio 1 8.00pm News 8.30pm Radio 1 9.00pm News 9.30pm Radio 1 10.00pm News 10.30pm Radio 1 11.00pm News 11.30pm Radio 1 12.00am News 12.30am Radio 1 1.00am News 1.30am Radio 1 2.00am News 2.30am Radio 1 3.00am News 3.30am Radio 1 4.00am News 4.30am Radio 1 5.00am News 5.30am Radio 1 6.00am News 6.30am Radio 1 7.00am News 7.30am Radio 1 8.00am News 8.30am Radio 1 9.00am News 9.30am Radio 1 10.00am News 10.30am Radio 1 11.00am News 11.30am Radio 1 12.00am News 12.30am Radio 1 1.00am News 1.30am Radio 1 2.00am News 2.30am Radio 1 3.00am News 3.30am Radio 1 4.00am News 4.30am Radio 1 5.00am News 5.30am Radio 1 6.00am News 6.30am Radio 1 7.00am News 7.30am Radio 1 8.00am News 8.30am Radio 1 9.00am News 9.30am Radio 1 10.00am News 10.30am 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High drama and low humour poorly mixed

Sometimes television springs the most unexpected surprise. I mean, given the choice between the wonderful Warren Clarke in a new BBC drama or an ITV thriller in which Leslie Grantham plays a Norfolk policeman whose body has been occupied by aliens, it should be no contest. Clarke every time, right? Not at the moment it isn't.

I cannot stand *The Locksmith* (BBC1), which for those already confused is the one in which Clarke wears a pained expression throughout. This might express regret that his body has not been taken over by aliens (which at least would give him an excuse) or simply a profound wish that he had read the script more carefully — we are not told.

For the second week running, as the action lurched unhappily from high emotion to humour, I roared somewhere between slapstick and schoolboy. I got the

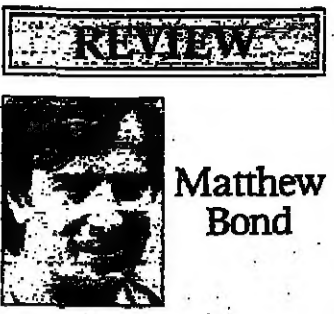
feeling that the filming of each scene must have been marked by the director turning and asking anxiously: "Does this work?" "Sort of," somebody else would mumble, too frightened or too unimportant to be able to scream "No."

As a result we move uncomfortably from Clarke, sending his socks off in scenes with his former wife (Sheila Kelley), whose severe head injury means she has forgotten that she hates him, to comic nonsense involving wigs, bare bottoms and bad backs. This is unfair not just on us but also on Clarke. For Clarke was not designed for emoting. Ask those famously craggy features to crumple and they will... but you had better have a very good reason. In *The Locksmith*, those reasons have been tossed away in the ill-judged pursuit of "laughs" and "lagers".

Which brings us to Barry, the pivotal *Murder-escape* character who might have brought the

comedy and tragedy together. The fact that he doesn't is nothing to do with Chris Gascoyne's performance, but everything to do with Stephen Bill's writing. In creating Barry, Bill has created television's first really charming git, the sort of oaf who picks out *Always Look on the Bright Side* while an elderly widow mourns her beloved Highland terrier, which has just been found in all-too-convincing bits. On paper, you can still just about see that he could theoretically have been funny. But on screen, with Jean Heywood acting serious distress, it wasn't. "Does this work?" I heard a timid voice ask. No.

By distinct contrast, *The Uninvited* (ITV) shouldn't work at all — and yet it does. It is breathtakingly unoriginal, owing a considerable debt to *Dr Who*, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and just about



everything ever written by Brian Clemens and breathtakingly silly. It centres on the villagers of Sweethope, all of whom miraculously survived the huge explosion that toppled their East Coast village into the sea, and all of whom have gone on to be terrifically successful. The question is — as always — are these people really everything that they appear to be? Well, it didn't need Leslie

Grantham's eyes to turn white to tell us the answer to that one. *The Uninvited* knows its humour, but it's honest humour, played straight but quickly acknowledging that it is taking us down a familiar path. Last week, as our hero raced through the East Anglian countryside in his sports car, the camera lingered on a junk-shop mannequin. Whether the head turned, as you half expected, or not, as was actually the case, didn't matter. The dues had been paid.

Thus, that last night, allowed Leslie Grantham, playing a Norfolk policeman whose brush with aliens has miraculously left him with a London accent, to say: "Tell me what I should be afraid of" and for Steve, our photographer hero (a commendably straight-faced Douglas Hodge) to answer: "The truth." Well, it must be out there somewhere, I suppose. Why not Norfolk?

Last night the plot moved on to

break far from new ground by involving a sinister corporation manufacturing even more sinister computer software, the smiling employees "welcome to the future" (a different coloured friend?) were ordered about by Tanney. Don't know about you, but it reminded me of *Telerubbies*.

Among the cast, Lia Williams, playing librarian and potential love interest, probably takes top honours, although as everyone else is playing either aliens or journalists (much of a muchness in performance terms) this is perhaps not the accolade it might have been. At least the arrival of Jean Anderson, having fun playing the alien who had the bad luck to take over a human being suffering from Alzheimer's, gave her competition. "We are two, not one," she croaked, shortly before her eyes went white, too. At the end of

episode two nearly everyone had been dead at least once, which I've got the plot right means they'll all be back in time for episode three. Count wait.

Finally, *Lovely Planet* (Channel 4) returned and once again reminded us that the best reason for not travelling to far-flung foreign parts is to avoid a chance encounter with Ian Wright. *Fast Show* lampooning has changed him not one jot. Glacial-steps primed, baseball cap on back to front — off we went again, although what Ethiopia had done to deserve him I wasn't sure. Wasn't poverty, famine and war enough?

Wright remains supremely jarring company ("check this out — yee haw") but fair do's: he did manage to make the country look like somewhere the more intrepid among us might like to visit. It was, he concluded, "a right mind-blower". Nevertheless, I think I'll stick with Cornwall for now.

REVIEW

Matthew Bond

- BBC1**
- 8.00am Business Breakfast (25311)
 - 9.00am BBC Breakfast News (20011951)
 - 9.05am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (3186135)
 - 9.55am Style Challenge (3370955)
 - 10.00am Killy (1) (777852)
 - 10.25am Change That in Cambridge (8618932)
 - 11.00am News (1) Regional News and weather (7007629)
 - 11.05am Labour Party Conference '97 The day's proceedings in Brighton (3514383)
 - 12.00pm News (1) and weather (1508)
 - 12.30pm Regional News (7377203)
 - 1.00pm The Weather Show (3213408)
 - 1.45pm Neighbours (1) (7193371)
 - 2.10pm Quincy The coroner's abilities are called into question when he testifies against a mobster accused of inducing a fatal heart attack (1) (8615861)
 - 3.00pm Through the Keyhole (5241)
 - 3.30pm Playdays (3332241) 3.50pm Dear Mr Barker (3518203) 4.05pm The All New Popeye (1216146) 4.15pm The Cat (857152) 4.35pm Record Breakers (1) (8141146) 5.00pm Newsround (1) (2415845) 5.10pm Blue Peter (1) (8614970)
 - 5.35pm Neighbours (1) (822425)
 - 6.00pm 6 O'Clock News (1) and weather (84)
 - 6.30pm Regional News (18)
 - 7.00pm Weekend Watchdog with Anne Robinson The team take a close look at tour operators, antique dealers and hire car companies (1) (7222)
 - 7.30pm Top of the Pops Eclectic mix, new videos and live performances, plus a rundown of the Top 40 (1) (23)
 - 8.00pm Vets in Practice Joe faces a dilemma over whether to treat a dog's ear problem, even though its owner cannot afford treatment. On the personal front, Joe's wife takes a new job and Hannah is worried by rising doubts (1) (8970)
 - 9.30pm Children's Hospital A top-class unit, dedicated to the care of children, opens a clinic which will cure her but leave her infertile. Elsewhere, a youngster receives speech therapy (1) (7777)
 - 9.50pm 6 O'Clock News (1) and weather (4357)
 - 9.55pm Dangerfield House Calls A woman is left shaken following a car crash, but doesn't realise the seriousness of the situation (1) (7047)
 - 10.20pm The Nation's Favourite Love Poem Vivian Durrant reads Love Sonnet 44, by Pablo Neruda (866830)
 - 10.25pm Partinosis The interviewees: Larger-than-life star of stage and screen, Betty Miller in a vintage interview (1) (866830)
 - 11.05pm For the Record (1991) Mike Miller and James Cash stars wartime entertainers, boasting the status of US troops overseas. Directed by Mark Rydell (1) (3523048)
 - 12.00am A Town Called Hell (1973) starring Robert Shaw, Telly Savalas and Robert Duvall Based on Jack Kerouac's novel, the film tells the story of a small town in the US, where the local people are worshipped by the local people. Directed by Robert Fuest (867836)
 - 2.55pm Weather (301471)

- BBC2**
- 8.00am Old Country Problems and Social Welfare Course Review (2211930)
 - 8.25pm Survival Strategies (2297116) 8.50pm Bulls, Bears and China Stocks (863328)
 - 7.15pm See Hear Breakfast News (1) (280555)
 - 7.30pm Smurfs' Adventures (1) (4601715) 7.55pm Smart (1) (8628244) 8.20pm William's Wish Wellingtons (1) (8513135) 8.25pm Wishing (1) (8532114) 8.35pm Teletubbies (1) (8521335) 8.50pm Cartoon (3113300) 8.10pm Mistic Makers (7471880) 9.30pm Watch (8931425) 9.45pm Come Outside (8629880) 10.00pm Teletubbies (87951) 10.30pm Look and Read (7313864) 10.50pm The Art (7836328) 11.10pm Landmarks (5818628) 11.30pm English File (8664) 12.00pm Scene (8683)
 - 12.30pm Working Lunch (73422) 1.00pm The Little Polar Bear (1) (3311300) 1.05pm Pingu (1) (5310661) 1.10pm The Country's Hour: Dorset and Wiltshire (794203)
 - 2.10pm Wildlife on Two Bee-eaters in Kenya (1) (3118203) 2.40pm News and weather (1) (333330)
 - 2.45pm Match of the Seventies (1) (1) (820948) 3.25pm News (1) (422778) 3.30pm Real Rooms (1) (854131) 3.35pm Consuming Passions: brooch with a taste of the Orient (1) (890988) 4.00pm Ready, Steady Cook (57) 4.30pm Going, Going, Gone (8140777) 4.55pm Either single-sex schools (809406) 5.30pm Today's the Day (59)
 - 6.00pm Star Trek (1) (856574)
 - 6.30pm The O Zone Robbie Williams performs his new single and Paul Weller on his new video (427715)
 - 7.00pm The World's Worst Round the World Yacht Race After two weeks at sea the fleet begins to split (584)
 - 7.30pm Top Gear Motorsport Rallycross Supercar, Eurocar action at Castle Combe, and Formula Ford in review (70)
 - 8.00pm The Big Catch The Scottish giant seals, nicknamed "the barn doors" (1) (4512)
 - 8.30pm Ground Force Alan Titchmarsh and his team of experts set about revamping a Sussex watermill garden (1) (7749)
 - 9.00pm Red Dwarf Later meets old flame Kristine Kowalski (1) (2393)
 - 9.30pm The Rag Nymph First of a three-part drama about a young girl adopted by a rag lady, who later her mother commits suicide (1) (6067)
 - 10.00pm News (1) and weather (41338)
 - 10.10pm Regional News (869425)
 - 10.40pm 12.40 WALEs: The Freshman (1980) with Marion Brando, Matthew Broderick and Bruno Kirby. A naive college student lands what he thinks is a job of a lifetime, but he soon realises that it is, in fact, working for an ageing Mafia don. Directed by Andrew Bergman (7857116)
 - 10.40pm Late and Live With guest Stuart Higgins, editor of The Sun (585861)
 - 12.10pm Campus Cops (468450)
 - 12.40pm The Paul Ross Show (8060891)
 - 2.10pm King of the Wind (1989) with Richard Harris, Jeremy Agutter and Nigel Hawthorne. The story of an 18th-century rockers' fantasy. Directed by Peter Dinklage (389628)
 - 3.55pm Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club (4743718) 4.25pm Cool Vibes (8746029) 4.35pm Coach (1) (5646723) 5.00pm Coronation Street (1988) 5.30pm News

- HTV**
- 8.00am GMTV (4331154)
 - 9.25pm Supermarket Sweep (1) (3182319)
 - 9.55pm Regional News (328954)
 - 10.00pm The Time, the Place (61777)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (1) (7785781)
 - 12.20pm Regional News (8476661)
 - 12.30pm News (1) and weather (5821512)
 - 12.55pm WALEs: Grass Roots (1) (1) (506020)
 - 12.55pm Dogs with Dubs (506203) 1.25pm Murder and Away (1) (7826300) 1.50pm Murder, She Wrote (1) (8315854) 2.50pm The Pulse (1) (8558770) 2.50pm Garden Calendar (1) (86370)
 - 3.30pm News (1) (4210351)
 - 3.35pm Regional News (4210222)
 - 3.50pm Joy's World (833383) 3.40pm Titch (8628154) 3.50pm Oscar and Friends (8622338) 4.00pm Roger and the Rotarounds (1) (8718203) 4.15pm Hurricanes (1) (860880) 4.40pm Fun House (1) (784282)
 - 5.10pm A Country Practice (3205883)
 - 5.40pm News (1) and weather (576113)
 - 6.00pm Home and Away (1) (846828)
 - 6.25pm HTV Weather (725503)
 - 8.30pm HTV News (1) (12)
 - 7.00pm Eamonn Black Kim's new business partner has a proposition for Kathy (1) (2390)
 - 7.30pm Coronation Street Maureen makes a momentous decision (1) (98)
 - 8.00pm The Bill: Free to Speak Will Slater, a police officer, takes his first steps towards a romantic dinner (1) (8336)
 - 8.30pm Strange But True? More true-life stories of the supernatural, including Britain's No. 1 UFO hot spot, and the sinister beast stalking the Durham dunes (1) (7845)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (5806203)
 - 2.50pm-3.20pm Surprise Chefs (869970)
 - 5.10pm-5.40pm Shortland Street (3205883)
 - 6.25pm Central News (824319)
 - 6.55pm-7.00pm Debatters: Lifetime (798357)
 - 10.40pm Central Weekend Live (5638661)
 - 2.10pm The LADS (1788338)
 - 2.40pm Cool Vibes (8698810)
 - 2.50pm Cool Office America (558568)
 - 3.20pm Baywatch (859945)
 - 4.10pm Central Jobfinder '97 (5056007)
 - 5.20pm Arian (735278)
- WEST COUNTRY**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.20pm-12.30pm Illuminations (8478661)
 - 12.55pm Home and Away (5806203)
 - 1.25pm Spill the Beans (4604715)
 - 1.55pm Westcountry Update (71675319)
 - 2.25pm-3.20pm Blue Heelers (862884)
 - 5.10pm-5.40pm Home and Away (3205883)
 - 6.00pm-7.00pm Westcountry Live (78970)
 - 10.30pm Westcountry News (559777)
 - 10.45pm Blue Blood Out (1981). A thriller starring John Travolta, directed by Brian De Palma (7881777)
- WESSEX**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm-1.25pm Shortland Street (5806203)
 - 1.50pm Serve Your Right (71678048)
 - 2.20pm-3.20pm Highway to Heaven (7373628)
 - 5.10pm-5.40pm Home and Away (3205883)
 - 6.00pm-7.00pm Meridian Tonight (78970)
 - 10.30pm Meridian News and Weather (559777)
 - 10.45pm Chiller (923357)
 - 11.45pm Waseguy (851777)
 - 5.00pm FreeScreen (1988)
- WESSEX**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.15pm Anglia Air Watch (8498796)
 - 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (5806203)
 - 1.50pm A Splash of Colour (71678048)
 - 2.20pm-3.20pm Highway to Heaven (7373628)
 - 5.10pm-5.40pm Shortland Street (3205883)
 - 6.25pm Anglia Weather (726338)
 - 6.25pm-7.00pm Anglia News (107425)
 - 10.29pm Anglia Air Watch (867319)
 - 10.30pm Anglia News Extra (80066)
 - 11.00pm Film: Blood from the Mummy's Tomb (641883)
- STARTS: 7.00am The Big Breakfast (86339)**
- 9.00pm Yegolion (580795) 11.30pm Home One I Made Earlier (86339) 12.00pm Sesame Street (31951) 12.30pm Riddick Lake (86339) 1.00pm The Muppet Show (3274111) 1.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 1.50pm The Simpsons (86339) 2.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 2.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 3.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 3.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 4.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 4.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 5.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 5.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 6.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 6.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 7.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 7.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 8.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 8.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 9.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 9.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 10.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 10.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 11.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 11.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 12.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 12.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 1.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 1.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 1.50pm The Simpsons (86339) 2.00pm The Simpsons (86339) 2.30pm The Simpsons (86339) 3.00pm The Simpsons 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